

The Gay Games: The Play of Sexuality, Sport and Community

By

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Abstract

This thesis is the first comprehensive social history of the international Gay Games from its inception in 1980 up until 2002. These Games have become one of the largest sporting, cultural and human rights events in the world, as well as the largest international participatory gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex event (GLBTQI). Five Gay Games are examined including: the first two Gay Games held in San Francisco in 1982 and 1986; the third held in Vancouver in 1990; the fourth held in New York in 1994 and the fifth held in Amsterdam in 1998. Particular attention is paid to the ways that gender, sexuality, sport and community are played out within this history of the Games. Three historical research methods are used. These are archival and document analysis, oral history interviewing and the examination of secondary sources. Participant observation is also used to supplement historical understanding of the Amsterdam Gay Games. Each Gay Games has been contextualised within broader social histories of relevant mainstream communities and GLBTQI communities, and social and theoretical understandings of gender and sexuality. The results indicate that while the Gay Games have had a significant community building effect amongst gay and lesbian people, there still exists lively tension between the Gay Games assimilative tendencies and its transformative promise.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Together we ran, jumped, played, loved and unalterably changed each other's lives.¹

The international Gay Games have become one of the largest sporting, cultural and human rights events in the world, as well as the largest international participatory gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (GLBTQI) event.² The Games have been held every four years since its beginning in 1982. The first and second Games were held in San Francisco, followed by Vancouver, New York City, Amsterdam and Sydney. Over this period the Games have grown ten fold in participation and have developed from an essentially local Californian multi-sport event to a multi-million dollar mega-event engaging people from all continents in diverse programs of sports, cultural, entertainment and human rights.

An international Gay Games movement has also developed through the success of the Games and includes GLBTQI sport, recreation and cultural clubs, organisations, events, competitions and festivals. According to Dennis Altman, a leading academic on the development of gay and lesbian communities worldwide, the Gay Games movement has become one of the largest international gay and lesbian institutions.³

This movement ensures ongoing community activities and development through sport

¹ Richard Forzley and E. Douglas Hughes (eds), *The Spirit Captured: the Official Photojournal of Celebration '90 – Gay Games III and Cultural Festival* (Vancouver: Eyes Press, 1990), p. 1.

² GLBTQI will be used throughout the thesis as the short hand version of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities. GLBT is also used for this purpose, especially in chapter 5 of the thesis. Intersex peoples were not really recognised in Gay Games participation policy until the Sydney 2002 Gay Games.

³ Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2001), p. 100.

and culture. An international governing body overseeing the continuity of the Gay Games – the Federation of Gay Games (FGG) was founded in Seattle in 1989.

Inspired by the Olympics, but disillusioned by its apparent racism, sexism, nationalism, homophobia and elitism, the principal founder of the Gay Games, Tom Waddell, envisaged the Gay Games as a peoples' games.⁴ Hence, the main aims of the international Gay Games movement are the fostering of inclusion, participation and doing one's personal best.⁵ The Gay Games were to be open to people of all sexual orientations, genders, races, nationalities, ages, abilities, religions and political perspectives – so long as participants adhered to this spirit of inclusion and respect for diversity. The early organisers also valued sport participation because it was thought to give a focus to people's lives, to provide an opportunity to meet others and form friendships, as well as to provide an avenue for personal achievement and validation. It was also believed that through an inclusive Games philosophy and the vehicle of participatory sport, segregation and prejudice within gay and lesbian communities could be broken down.

The centrality of sport to the original Gay Games program had other purposes - the principal one being to demonstrate to mainstream society that gay people were like everyone else – they played sport. This mainstreaming exercise would supposedly help dispel myths about gay men being un-masculine. After all, sports, especially those involving the demonstration of strength, power, speed and combativeness, were considered as excellent social practices to affirm one's masculinity. Ironically, these

⁴ Interview with Tom Waddell in Michael Messner and Don Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sport: Rethinking Masculinity* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1994), pp. 113-119.

⁵ Federation of Gay Games Web Site, *About the Federation of Gay Games* (Accessed March 20, 2003). Available from the World Wide Web <http://www.gaygames.com/en/federation/indix/cfm>.

sports were developed as training grounds and celebratory public arenas for supremacist forms of heterosexual masculinity. Sport had become one of the most mediatised, globalised, consumed and naturalising institutions for “defining preferred and disparaged forms of masculinity and femininity, instructing boys and men in the ‘art’ of making certain kinds of men”.⁶ Homosexual men were definitely suspect in this macho sports world, and women were rendered the naturally inferior ‘other’. Rigid, limiting and discriminatory binary oppositions of male/female, masculinity/femininity, heterosexuality/homosexuality, which have predominated in Western understandings of sex, gender and sexuality, have been naturalised, reinforced and at times resisted within the arena of sport.

Significance

Whilst the Gay Games have had a mainstreaming emphasis, they have also been envisaged as a ‘radical’ alternative to conventional sporting events and practices. Representations and embodiment of sport, sex, gender, sexuality and community appear to be played out at the Gay Games in challenging as well as conventional ways. Their affirming sporting and cultural environment for GLBTQI peoples and their potential resistance to the gender order make the Gay Games a significant event. The scale of the international Gay Games movement and the more particular impacts of individual Gay Games upon GLBTQI communities globally, within host cities and local contexts, are also important areas for investigation.

⁶ David Rowe and Jim McKay, ‘Sport: Still a Man’s Game’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (December 1998), p. 118.

This thesis provides the first comprehensive socio-cultural history of the Gay Games from their founding up until their hosting in Amsterdam in 1998. It concentrates on the way each Gay Games was organised, and the network of political, social, cultural and economic factors that influenced the organisation, policies, conduct and lived experience of these Games. The internationalisation of the Gay Games movement during the 1990s is also touched upon. Each Gay Games is located within the social context, including the gay and lesbian history of its host city and country. Broad and important historical influences affecting GLBTQI communities during the latter part of the twentieth century have also contributed to the shaping and impact of the Gay Games. These include counter cultural and civil rights developments of the 1960s and 1970s, gay and lesbian liberation, feminism, HIV and AIDS, the backlash of the right in many Western nations, the effects of consumer capitalism and the health and fitness movement, the rise of mass participatory mega-events, identity and difference politics, and the global circulation of gay and lesbian identities.

Popular work on these Games has so far consisted of coffee table glossies and brief journalistic accounts.⁷ Scholarly research on the Gay Games has principally consisted of journal articles examining the economic growth and significance and the social and psychological impacts of particular Gay Games. For instance, leading academic in the sports management field, Brenda Pitts, has published numerous journal articles on the growth of the gay and lesbian sports and recreation industry and movement within the US, and the commercialisation of the Gay Games.⁸ Sport psychologist and academic,

⁷ For instance, Roy Coe, *A Sense of Pride: The Story of Gay Games II* (San Francisco: Pride Publications, 1986), Forzley and Hughes (eds), *The Spirit Captured*, and Lisa Labrecque (ed.) *Unity: A Celebration of Gay Games IV and Stonewall* (San Francisco: Labrecque Publishing, 1994)

⁸ For instance: Brenda Pitts and E. Kevin Ayers, 'An Analysis of Visitor Spending and Economic Scale on Amsterdam from the Gay Games V, 1998' *International Journal of Sport*

Vikki Krane, has researched the social-psychological impacts of Gay Games IV and V on lesbian participants, most of who reside in the US.⁹ Critical philosopher and social theorist, Brian Pronger, has analysed the masculine arena of sport and the significance of gay men's sports involvement, particularly within gay sports leagues and events such as the Gay Games.¹⁰ Pat Griffin has written on the climates of discrimination and inclusion for lesbians within sports organisations and settings of the US.¹¹ Prominent sport sociologist, historian and feminist, Jennifer Hargreaves, has recently made an important contribution to the understanding of lesbian and gay sports developments, including the Gay Games, in her book on marginalised and heroic sports women – *Heroines of Sport*.¹² There is also a doctoral thesis written by Judith Cramner that investigates the media coverage of Gay Games IV.¹³ An online journal dedicated to GLBTQI issues, especially within Australia, produced an edition featuring the Gay Games that was published just before Sydney 2002.¹⁴ However, there has been little in the way of a comprehensive social history of the Gay Games.

Management, vol. 2 (2001), pp. 134-151; Brenda Pitts, 'Beyond the Bars: The Development of Leisure-Activity Management in the Lesbian and Gay Population in America, *Leisure Information Quarterly*, vol. 15, no 3 (1988), pp. 4-7; Brenda Pitts, 'From Leagues of Their Own to An Industry of Their Own: The Emerging Lesbian Sports Industry, *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1997), pp. 109-139.

⁹ Vicki Krane and L Romont, 'Female Athletes Motives and Experiences at the Gay Games', *Journal of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Identities*, vol. 2 (1997), pp. 123-138. V. Krane and H. Barber, 'Social Psychological Benefits of Gay Games Participants: A Social Identity Theory Explanation' Manuscript submitted for publication in *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* in July 2001. Krane has also written about the cultural and political significance of the Gay Games in a co-authored paper: Krane, and Jennifer Waldron, 'The Gay Games: Creating Our Own Sports Culture', in K. Schaffer and S. Smith, *The Olympics and the Millennium: Power, Politics and the Games*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000, pp. 147-159.

¹⁰ Brian Pronger, *The Arena of Masculinity: Homosexuality and the Meaning of Sex* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

¹¹ Pat Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets. Lesbians and Homophobia in Sports* (Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetics, 1998)

¹² Jennifer Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000).

¹³ Judith Cramer, 'We're Here, We're Queer': *Breaking the Silence with Gay Games IV*. Unpublished PhD (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, 1997)

¹⁴ Feature articles were by Kevin Markwell, David Rowe and Donna Russo 'Towards an 'Exemplary Community'? The Politics of the International Gay Games', *Wordisout E-Journal*, no. 4

During the 1990s there was a significant growth in research on the experiences of gays and lesbians in sport and physical education within Western countries such as Canada, England, the US, the Netherlands and Australia.¹⁵ Whilst this research revealed little specifically on the Gay Games, it deepened understanding in the areas of sporting life and homophobic prejudice, systemic heterosexism, discrimination, harassment, media representation of gays and lesbians in sport, the development of separate gay and lesbian sports organisations and social policy implications in sport and physical education. This research provides a foundation for understanding the nature and significance of the Gay Games.

(September 2002); and Caroline Symons, 'Gay Games. What's the Olympics Got To Do With Them?', *Wordisout* E-Journal, no. 4 (September 2002).

¹⁵ For instance, the Canadian and Australian context has been written about by Helen Lenskyj in 'Sport and the threat to gender boundaries', *Sporting Traditions* (Sydney, Aust) vol. 12, no. 1 (1995), pp. 47-60; 'Sexuality and Femininity in Sport Contexts: Issues and Alternatives', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, vol. 18, no. 4 (1995), pp. 356-376; and 'No Fear? Lesbians in Sport and Physical Education', *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1997), pp 7-22 to name a few of her key articles. Lenskyj has recently published a compilation of her essays on gender, sexuality and sport and there is a short essay on the Gay Games in this collection titled *Out on the Field: Gender, Sport and Sexualities* (Toronto: Women's Press, 2003). The context within the UK has been written about by Gill Clarke: 'Queering the Pitch and Coming Out to Play: Lesbians in Physical Education and Sport', *Sport, Education and Society*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1997), pp 145-160, also with J. Wright, 'Sport, the Media and the Construction of Compulsory Heterosexuality', *Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE)* (1997); Griffin has published in this area for the US context. So has Susan Cahn: 'From the "Muscle Moll" To The "Butch" Ballplayer: Manishness, Lesbianism and Homophobia in US Women's Sport', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 348-354. Dan Woog's, *Jocks: True Stories of America's Gay Male Athletes*, (LA: Alyson Books, 1998) covers some very interesting interviews with gay male athletes and their experiences in the American sports world. Gert Hekma has researched the experiences of gay and lesbian peoples within sports organisations and contexts of the Netherlands. See G. Hekma, *Al ze Maar Niet Provocern. Discriminatie van Homoseksuele Mannen en Lesbische Vrouwen in de Georganiseerde Sport* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994). Angela Burroughs, L. Ashburn and L. Seebohm have written about the heterosexist and homophobic media coverage of women's cricket within Australia in 'Add Sex and Stir': Homophobic Coverage of Women's Cricket in Australia', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, vol. 19, no. 3 (1995), pp. 266-284. Lawrence Rowe and Jim McKay address gender and sexuality within Australian sport making particular reference to gay men, in 'Sport: Still a Man's Game'. This is not an extensive list. Only some of the major contributors to this field of research are mentioned. See Pam Thomas and Caroline Symons, 'A Select Bibliography' in Dennis Hemphill and Caroline Symons (eds), *Gender, Sexuality and Sport: A Dangerous Mix* (Petersham, NSW: Walla Walla Press, 2001), pp. 122-131, for a more extensive list of references on this topic. Many more also appear within the body of this thesis.

Considering the degree of politicisation of the gay and lesbian movement in general, there has been a paucity of scholarly inquiry into major sporting and cultural events such as the Gay Games. This thesis appears to be the first to make use of the Gay Games Archive to inform a social history of the Gay Games.¹⁶ The Games Archive is currently housed in the San Francisco Public Library within its Gay and Lesbian Studies Centre.¹⁷

An important reason for the dearth of research on homosexuality and sport, at least up until the 1990s, appears to have been the fear of homophobic stigma.¹⁸ Homophobia is present in most aspects of our culture, and can be particularly virulent in physical education and sport. Many gays and lesbians are also fearful of speaking about their lives, their communities and their histories. A history of the Gay Games can bring to

¹⁶ Based on current research publications and theses specifically documenting the Gay Games.

¹⁷ This library was chosen as the repository of the Gay Games Archive because San Francisco was the original host of the Gay Games and the FGG. Its Gay and Lesbian Studies Centre was established in the mid 1990s through over 2.5 million dollars in donations from 'the Gay and Lesbian Friends of the San Francisco Public Library. See Tina Miller, 'Archives of the Gay Games', research paper written for her graduate archival studies with the San Jose University School of Library and Information Science, Fullerton campus program, dated November 1995. This paper provides in-depth description of the archives, its history, development, significance and contents. Miller gave the researcher a copy of this paper whilst at CSU, San Marcos.

¹⁸ See Pat Griffin and James Genasci, 'Addressing Homophobia in Physical Education: Responsibilities for Teachers and Researchers', in Michael Messner and Donald Sabo, *Sport, Men and the Gender Order. Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1990), pp. 216-221 for a discussion of the impact of homophobia on the research culture within colleges and universities of the US. Gill Clarke discusses this within the research climate of physical education and sport within the UK in, 'The research that dare not speak its name – doing controversial research in physical education', in F.I. Bell and G.H. Van Gyn (eds), *Proceedings for the 10th Commonwealth and International Scientific Congress: Access to Active Living*, 10-14 August 1994. Nancy Bailey presented a paper on 'Organising the Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgendered and Allies Council (LGBTAC) within the American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) at the International Queer Studies Conference *Out From the Centre*, held in Newcastle, Australia just before the Sydney 2002 Gay Games (29-30 October, 2002). In this paper she described the marginalisation and homophobic politics many gay and lesbian academics, teachers and student experienced within the profession of physical education. She is one of the founding organisers and first Chair of the LGBTAC – which was formed during 2001-2002. Other academics working on GLBTQ issues within sport and physical education who attended this conference session also shared similar stories of marginalisation, prejudice and the need to act and research with courage. These academics were from North America, Australia, England and Germany. I was the chair of this conference session.

the public eye some of the meanings and values of those who have, as a result of homophobia, been rendered virtually invisible.

There is significant diversity within GLBTQI communities along the lines of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, age, socio-economic class, ability/disability, HIV status, religion and political perspective. Modern social identities such as 'lesbian', 'gay', 'bisexual', 'transgender' and 'queer' in themselves carry no single political agenda.¹⁹ Same-sex desire and systems of gender/sexuality worldwide are also diverse. As a distinctly recent Western mega-event that professes inclusion as a central principal, the Gay Games stand out as a test case for diversity sensitivity in policy and practice. The challenges of organising a major event, the particular opportunities and obstacles presented with this very large and public GLBTQI event, and the complexities of inclusiveness, are all addressed in this social history of the Gay Games.

This thesis takes an approach to the question of human rights, in which sexual orientation and gender identity are contingent upon history, power and politics and social justice is principally concerned with removing pain and suffering, giving voice to the marginalised and silenced, and demonstrating the diversity and difference within more naturalised and accepted constructions/views of being human.

¹⁹ Steven Epstein, 'Gay and Lesbian Movements in the United States. Dilemmas of Identity, Diversity, and Political Strategy', in B. Adams, J. Duyvendak and A. Krouwel (eds), *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics. National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), p. 30.

Statement of Aims

The general aim of this thesis is to provide a social history of the Gay Games from their origins in San Francisco in 1980 to Gay Games V held in Amsterdam in 1998.

The Specific aims to this thesis are:

1. To understand the Gay Games in their historical and social context. This includes: the social context of the society in which they are hosted; how the Games have been organised, developed and changed; how the international Gay Games movement has developed and its relationships to the Gay Games; the international context of the Gay Games and their global impacts; and what the Games have represented to participants and to mainstream culture.
2. To examine and compare critically the social constructions and meanings of sex, gender, sexuality, sport and community in mainstream sport and the Gay Games.
3. To examine critically the politics of the Gay Games. This includes the politics of identity and difference and the implications of the Gay Games for the globalisation of gay and lesbian identity.

Particular attention will be paid to the role and organisation of sport at the Gay Games as issues of sex, gender and sexuality for GLBTQI communities and mainstream society are most contentious and significant here. A substantial Cultural Festival was added to the Gay Games program in Vancouver in 1990. Culture had essentially been left off or downplayed within the Games agenda by the early organisers because gays performing in theatre and dance only tended to confirm stereotypes. The Cultural Festival of the Games has historical significance in itself and its development is documented in this thesis. The actual development of the Cultural Festival has a strong gendered and sexual politics. Likewise, the inclusion of a social issues and international human rights program during the Amsterdam Gay Games of 1998 will

also be examined as an integral part of the growth, development and global reach of the Gay Games.

Methodology

Several traditional tools of historical research are used in this thesis. These are archival and document analysis, oral history interviewing, and the examination of secondary sources. The latter includes media commentary and short souvenir histories of a number of the Gay Games as well as their contextualisation within broader social histories of relevant mainstream communities and GLBTQI communities, as well as within social theoretical understandings of gender and sexuality. Participant observation is also used to augment these history methods and the researcher's understanding of the development, processes, personalities and politics of the Federation of Gay Games (FGG), and Gay Games V. The variety of methods ensured thorough crosschecking (triangulation) of data, wherever this was possible, in the analysis. Each of these methods is outlined below.

Archival Research

Materials in this archive were first 'mined' in December of 1995, when it was being organised for the first time by archivist and graduate student, Tina Miller, under the supervision of Terry Allison, the Collections Librarian at California State University (CSU), San Marcos.²⁰ At this time the archive was housed at CSU, San Marcos and consisted of 30 cubic feet of records contained within 26 boxes.²¹ One box contained materials from Gay Games I–III. The remaining 25 boxes contained material from Gay Games IV. According to Tina Miller records for the first three Gay Games were

²⁰ Terry Allison was also a member of the FGG Board of Directors at this time.

²¹ Miller, 'Archives of the Gay Games', p. 5.

rather patchy, and for the first Games they were “scant”.²² These records were filed in original order and consisted primarily of articles, letters, official Gay Games programs, advertisements, newsletters, newspaper clippings, organisational information and statements of intent and policy from the FGG. There is enough information about Gay Games III for a researcher to “be able to form a clear picture of this athletic and cultural event”.²³

The FGG had contracted the New York Gay Games hosting body for the retention and shipment of materials of Gay Games IV to the initial organising location of the archives at San Marcos. The Federation had also budgeted funds to cover this shipment and processing. Hence, the records of Gay Games IV are “nearly complete in all respects”.²⁴ These records include photographs, slides, videos, audiotapes, artwork, original music scores and memorabilia, as well as letters, faxes, memos, contracts, meeting agendas and minutes, policy statements, official programs and newspaper/ magazine clippings. Apparently some of the key archives boxes for these Gay Games were with the organisers of Gay Games V from 1996-1998. I did not gain access to these boxes.

More extensive research on the archive occurred during November of 1996 making a total time of six weeks spent collecting and analysing archival material within San Marcos. Materials that were deemed significant to the piecing together of the history of the Games were photocopied to be brought back to Australia for further analysis. Major items that could not be copied such as videos and memorabilia were analysed

²² Miller, ‘ Archives of the Gay Games’, p. 5.

²³ Miller, ‘ Archives of the Gay Games’, p. 7.

²⁴ Miller, ‘ Archives of the Gay Games’, p. 5.

on the spot, and three notebooks were filled with direct observations, a chronology, notes on key Games organisers, participants, players and events, organisational systems and developments and political issues. A list of questions and gaps pertaining to the Games history was also created, to be explored further in the oral history interviews and follow-up research.

It was Miller's task to organise this archive into a recognisable format and advise on issues of sensitivity, preservation and storage. The archive was used during and after the final stages of this first organisation at San Marcos. It is likely that when the archives were integrated within the San Francisco Public Library collections the organisation and storage of materials was adapted to this library's operations and procedures. As a result, the citations within this thesis are based entirely on the original archives organisation and may not match up with current storage indexing.

Official programs, posters, organisational information, photographs, newsletters, official reports, Gay Games memorabilia and newspaper/magazine clippings were also obtained from a number of other sources. Whilst attending the annual FGG Board meeting, held in Sydney in September of 1996 as an official observer, contact was made with a number of the key organisers of past Gay Games as well as Federation Directors. I also attended the 1997 annual meeting held in Denver, US and a FGG meeting held just before Gay Games V, in Amsterdam. As an observer and active member of the FGG Sports Committee, Outreach Committee, Women's Committee, Education and Archives Task Force and Transgender Task Force from 1996 – 2002 the minutes of meetings, policy documents, programs, reports and newsletters concerning the operations of the FGG as well as Gay Games IV, V and VI were all

made available. During a visit to Amsterdam in December of 1996 to interview the organisers of Gay Games V, information concerning the organisation of these Games was obtained. By participating in Gay Games V, further documentation in the form of programs, memorabilia, newspapers and photographs were collected. This material has been collected into a personal archive on the Gay Games, to be stored at Victoria University, Sunbury campus for the next five years.²⁵

The materials that were collected for analysis were filed according to the particular Gay Games they related to, with sub files dealing with personnel, organisational and operational issues, financial, sponsorship and marketing areas, sports and cultural organisation, ceremonies, media coverage, inclusive policies and political issues. A file was also dedicated to the FGG and consisted of sub-files on minutes, development, outreach, membership, policy and procedures, women's issues, transgender, sport, culture and relations with host of Gay Games.

An in-depth analysis of the micro-politics and decision-making processes that occurred during the organisation of each Gay Games is only touched on in this thesis. Generally speaking, the archival sources and interviews did not provide this detail. Many of the Gay Games policy documents did not give clear authorship or indicate the decision making process used to finalise policy. It was not until Gay Games IV

²⁵ This archive is called: Caroline Symons Gay Games Personal Archive, stored at Victoria University, Sunbury campus, in Caroline Symons' office. For the purposes of citation within this thesis, the full title of the Archive as given here will be made the first time that an item from the Archive is cited within a chapter. Any further items from the Archive collection that follow this item within a chapter will be given the abbreviated archival reference – VU: CSGGPA. This will also occur with any items from the San Francisco Public Library: Federation of Gay Games Archive, the abbreviated form of the latter being – SFPL: FGGA.

and V that staff in Directorships overseeing the organisation of key aspects of the Gay Games actually wrote detailed reports on their portfolio areas. These reports are discussed in chapter 5 of the thesis. They tend to emphasise positive outcomes although organisational difficulties are also alluded to. Political dissention and the final decision making/conflict resolution process are not given in these documents. A more detailed political analysis of the Gay Games – at the micro policy and organisational level – could be the subject of future research into the Gay Games and the international Gay Games movement.

The various techniques of content analysis commonly used in historical research were used to analyse the archival material.²⁶ This covered up to eight steps of decision-making and analysis for each piece of Gay Games documentation.²⁷ These steps included: describing what the document is, who wrote or produced it, its direct source and apparent purpose; what the document says about the author(s), the important issues, the gaps, silences and inconsistencies present; the direction of inquiry of the document and the main questions raised by it; the significance of the document to the research, how it could be used, what it proves; and lastly the systematic recording of the main findings derived from the document.

²⁶ J. Fines, *Reading Historical Documents: A Manual For Students* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 6-9.

²⁷ Fines outlines these eight main steps in, *Reading Historical Documents. A Manual For Students*, pp. 6-9. Applying all of these steps was not always possible. For instance the actual authors of the documents being analysed were not always obvious. Sometimes committees formulated them, at other times key individuals were the authors.

Traditional content analysis has concentrated on the frequency for which an item has presented as a measure of objectivity, or it has construed the meaning of a text as being clearly presented in what it directly says. This is thought to be naive and inadequate, for an understanding of the social conditions of the text's production as well as an exploration of the connections between its individual elements and the use of any stylised conventions within the document are essential for a more holistic understanding of a documentary source. As historian Joan Scott observes, assessing the quality and significance of a document is a "theoretically informed and value - relevant process".²⁸

From this analysis a rich picture of each Gay Games and the development of the international Gay Games movement itself could be woven together. Gaps in the story could be identified for further follow-up, inconsistencies could be cross checked with other materials and research methods, including oral histories.²⁹

Oral History Interviews

Historians have used oral history methods since the 1940s as a way of understanding history through the eyes of 'the people'. Hence it is derived from the personal and subjective experiences of individuals, the ways that they create, make sense of, and give meaning to their lives and the events, organisations and communities they are

²⁸ Joan. W. Scott, ' The Evidence of Experience', in H. Abelove, M. Barndale and D. Halperin (eds) *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 147.

²⁹ Allan Kellehear, *The Unobtrusive Researcher. A Guide To Methods* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1993), pp. 62-63.

involved with. Certain group and community attitudes as well as shared concerns and interpretations of historical events and cultural meanings are often clearly expressed in these oral accounts.³⁰ Orally communicated history is considered to be a most appropriate research method for exploring the subjective experience and meanings of these Games for the participants and organisers. It also provides original source material and complements the written record with first hand accounts. This involves explaining events and decisions more fully by providing more intimate, personal accounts on the history of the Games from the perspectives of organisers and participants.

A total of 39 oral history interviews were gathered and analysed in the construction of this Gay Games history. Twenty-one interviewees were ‘purposively selected’ because of their role as key players in the organisation of the five Gay Games. They had direct involvement either as paid or unpaid managers or Directors on the management boards of these Gay Games.³¹ Executive Directors from three of the Gay Games, as well as Board Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers, Operations, Marketing, Fundraising, Sports and Cultural managers were all interviewed. Most of these Gay Games managers also served as Directors on the Board of the Federation of Gay Games. As the Gay Games had been held four times within North America, eleven of the fifteen male managers interviewed and five of the six female managers interviewed came from either San Francisco or New York City.³² These people

³⁰ B. Allen and L. Montell, *From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), p. 21.

³¹ There was only one paid staff member within the organising body of Gay Games I and II. Many Gay Games personnel worked on a volunteer basis.

³² The Consulting Executive Director (ED) of Gay Games III – Shawn Kelly – was also the ED of Gay Games II and lived in San Francisco at the time the interviews were conducted. This location refers to where the interviewees principally lived or the Gay Games they were involved in organising.

discussed past memories and involvement with the Gay Games up until Amsterdam in 1998. One female and four male managers involved with the Amsterdam Games were also interviewed.³³ At the time of interviewing in December of 1996, they were in the process of organising Gay Games V.

The FGG is the international overseeing body of the Gay Games, being founded in 1989. Its primary purpose is to select the hosting city of a Gay Games, to ensure that the main principles of the Gay Games – inclusion, participation and achieving one's personal best – are maintained during a Gay Games, to monitor and advise on the overall running of a Gay Games, to protect the image and trademarks of the FGG, and to promote the growth and wellbeing of the international Gay Games movement. The FGG also sets specific policy guidelines for the Gay Games, for instance, the organisation and conduct of the sports program. Nine of the interviewees had been key players on the FGG without having been significantly involved in the organisation of a Gay Games. They were selected because they had contributed significantly to the shaping of particular aspects of the FGG, and due to their knowledge and involvement in the Gay Games themselves. Within this sample Directors came from South Africa, Canada, Germany and the US. Many of the Gay Games and FGG organisers that were interviewed had been inspired to take on leadership roles with the Games through actual participation in the sports and cultural aspects of a Gay Games, and many continued this sports and cultural participation.

³³ The office manager of Gay Games V, Jeanette Lott, was also interviewed. However, the tape recorder failed to work and only sketchy hand notes were taken. Hence, her transcript has not been included in this list.

Interviews were also conducted with eight Gay Games participants who had no direct management role with a Gay Games. They will be identified as “participants” in the following methodology discussion. Interviewees who had fulfilled an organisational role with the Gay Games will be identified as “organisers”. “Participant” interviews concentrated on the Gay Games experience itself and the meaning and significance of their participation. In this they provided background information during the research of the thesis.³⁴ Interviewees came from South Africa, Ireland, England, Australia and the US. There were four women and four men in this sample.

The Corresponding Secretary of the FGG was initially contacted in July of 1995 to explore ways of making contact with Gay Games managers and FGG Directors (“organisers”). Terry Allison outlined the nature of the history research project and circulated a sign up sheet for potential interviews at the 1995 annual FGG Board meeting held in Amsterdam later that year. Information letters on the project were sent to Directors who had indicated interest. Whilst attending the annual FGG Board meeting held in Sydney during September of 1996 as an official observer, a greater understanding of the organisation and the key players of the Gay Games and the Federation was developed, more interviewees were recruited and essential rapport building was achieved. During November and December of 1996 I travelled to the cities of San Francisco, San Diego, New York, Amsterdam and London to conduct research on the Gay Games, including the recording of these oral history interviews.

³⁴ When the research project was first envisaged a chapter was going to be written on the meaning and significance of the Gay Games for participants. Due to the small sample size and the already rather large scope of the thesis, this chapter was not included.

Most “participant” interviews also occurred at this time. “Participant” interviewees were sourced from three main avenues. “Organisers” recommended “Participants”, they were met situationally during the research project, or they were friends who had attended a Gay Games.³⁵ For instance, one of the most interesting and informative “participant” interviews eventuated from meeting a total stranger on a train in the London underground. I had just flown into London from Amsterdam and happened to sit next to a woman wearing lesbian signed earrings and political lapel pins. I struck up a conversation, learnt that she had played soccer at the Gay Games in New York, and subsequently lined up an interview for the following evening.

Other demographic information relevant in gaining an appreciation of the overall interview sample is summarised in Appendix 3 and 4. This sample does not purport to be representative of the diversity of participation at the Gay Games. Of the 38 people interviewed, 26 were men and 12 were women. There have been fewer women than men on the FGG and male managers outnumbered females at the first three Gay Games. Arrangements were made to see members of the women’s advisory committee of Gay Games V, but the Chair of this committee at the last minute cancelled the meeting. However, the final report of this committee was secured and used to inform the thesis. Most of the key women leaders of the early Games, Gay Games IV and the FGG were interviewed for this history. There has been little racial diversity within Gay Games management and FGG Directorship and only one African American and one Indigenous American Indian was interviewed. 75% of the sample were between 30 – 50 years of age and half were in their 40s. The overall age range was 25 – 80 years of age. Over 90% of those interviewed had completed a University

³⁵ I have numerous friends with first hand experience of a Gay Games.

degree and were concentrated in professional occupations such as law, management, social work and psychology, teaching, computer programming and sport and event management.

Only one of the organisers of Gay Games III was interviewed; he was from San Francisco and played an interim six-month role. Having fulfilled the role of Executive Director during Gay Games II Shawn Kelly did advise the Board of Directors of Gay Games III throughout its organisation. FGG involvement by those responsible for staging the Vancouver Games was non-existent at the time the interviews were organised, and the Vancouver personnel proved difficult to track down. Hence, the history of Gay Games III is largely based on archival materials and Shawn Kelly's experiences of these Games.

A semi-structured interview format was used.³⁶ Interviews took from one hour – four hours, with the longest being recorded over two-three sittings. All except three of the interviews were taped. Interviews were preceded by an explanation of the nature of the study, gaining informed consent and generally building rapport. Personal background information was collected on a demographics questionnaire. Background information was also covered at the beginning of the interview. The person's family life, schooling, sport and cultural interests were discussed. Experiences of being gay, lesbian or bisexual, 'coming out' experiences, as well as the sports climate for gay

³⁶ I used the following references to become familiar with interviewing technique and in the preparation of the interview schedule and process: Victor Minichiello, Rosalie Aroni, Eric Timewell, Loris Alexander, *In-Depth Interviewing. Principles, Techniques, Analysis (2nd Edition)* (Sydney, Longmans, 1995); Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History. A Practical Guide For Social Scientists* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 1994); Louise Douglas, Alan Roberts and Ruth Thompson, *Oral History. A Handbook* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988); Bruce Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (Third Edn) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998) and B. Allen and L. Montell, *From Memory to History*. The interview guide used in this research is contained in Appendix 4.

and lesbian athletes within mainstream and GLBTQ sports clubs and leagues were also explored. A few of the interviewees were primarily involved in cultural rather than sporting pursuits, and the interview questions were adapted accordingly.

The interview then turned to the person's Gay Games involvement, including their participation in various Gay Games, their organisational contributions and their general experiences and Games highlights. An open-ended approach was taken here as Gay Games involvement varied significantly between interviewees. Some key headings touched upon were: the narratives of how the various Gay Games were organised, the significance of the Gay Games guiding principles, how the Gay Games have developed and changed and what the Gay Games have meant to the interviewees.

Specific issues were also explored with Gay Games managers. These included: the impact of HIV and AIDS on the GLBTQI community and the Gay Games, the internationalisation of the Gay Games movement, the development of the cultural program, homophobic experiences/events at a Gay Games, the development of transgender participation policy, the performance enhancing drugs policy, issues of inclusion, professionalisation and commercial growth of the Gay Games, and the relationship of host city organising bodies of the Gay Games with the FGG. Some of the managers had specific areas of knowledge on the Gay Games that needed to be explored in an open-ended fashion. For instance as Marketing Manager of Gay Games IV, Harold Levine, spent most of his interview telling the story of how major sponsorship was secured for the first time for a major, public gay and lesbian event within the US.

Participant interviews were more open-ended and concentrated on the person's background, mainstream and GLBTQI sports and cultural experiences and Gay Games experiences. Rapport and trust with the interviewee was built very quickly. Rapport building activities and perspectives such as socialising, being an insider to the GLBTQI community, having shared interests in sport, sharing stories and having a friendly and open disposition, probably assisted this process. During the interview process I became adept at listening carefully to the audio and visual clues given by the interviewee, adapting questions and areas of discussion, clarifying, probing, gaining further elaboration and providing ongoing encouragement.

Spending time explaining the project and showing genuine commitment to the ethical dimensions of the research appeared to encourage enthusiastic participation in this project. In addition to gaining informed consent other ethical procedures adhered to included: privacy and confidentiality, secure storage of interview materials, informed and appropriate use of interview materials and the conduct of interviews in a sensitive and professional manner. The nature and scope of the project was fully explained along with the informed consent form, and all questions pertaining to the project and the consent form were answered before an interview took place. Interviewees were also informed that they could leave the project at any time they wished. A copy of the informed consent form and the official ethics approval form gained from Victoria University appears in Appendix 5.³⁷

All of the Gay Games managers and FGG Directors wished to use their real names in the publication of the history. This was considered to be a political act for them, one

³⁷ See copy of informed consent form that all interviewees signed – appendix 5.

of being public, visible and proud of who they were and their involvement and achievements with the Gay Games. All of these people hold leadership positions within their respective lesbian and gay communities as well as within the publicly accessible Gay Games organisations and the FGG. Hence, their real names have been used in this thesis. Participants were another matter and their names have been changed for reasons of confidentiality. Real names have been used for practically all key leaders within the Gay Games movement that appear in this history – including those not interviewed. These leaders have appeared in publicly accessible documents including Gay Games programs.

However, wherever there has been any doubt concerning the public identification of individuals a pseudonym has been used. Unless already in the public arena, or discussed in a way that confidentiality is maintained, the revelation of HIV status has also been kept strictly confidential. For instance, the Games founder, Tom Waddell, revealed his HIV positive status and illness in his biography. This is mentioned in the thesis. One of the “participant” interviewees won the silver medal in the weightlifting at Gay Games IV and he discussed the significance of this achievement as a HIV positive gay man. This “participants” name has not been used in the thesis.

The interviews were transcribed and filed in a locked filing cabinet. Main filing categories were the Gay Games in which the “organisers” were principally involved, FGG involvement and a “participant” file. I initially became immersed in the interview material by listening to the tapes, along with the transcripts and the notes made on the interview setting, personal observations and the demographic material. Each transcript was comprehensively examined and coded. Coding concentrated on

important and reoccurring themes and issues as well as the stories told concerning particular events making up the Gay Games, Games developments and the people involved.³⁸ Similar and dissimilar patterns and stories within the data were noted. Some individuals had unique aspects of the Gay Games story to tell and this was also noted.

A systematic indexing process was then established covering each Gay Games. Major themes, issues and developments were traced and general heading areas were developed for each Gay Games such as sport program, cultural program, organisation, marketing and the like. Archival material and the interviews were used to construct a general chronology of events, including major developments and milestones of the Gay Games movement and the FGG.

Gay Games organisers and participants discussed the meaning and significance of the Gay Games in personal terms. They highlighted what was important to them, used varying terminology, and had particular interests, political and personal agendas and perspectives. Minichiello notes that ‘stories’ during interviews may be over exaggerated to maximise ‘ listener impact’.³⁹ I was interested in and tried to be aware of these human biases – including my own. Events, experience and other phenomena often construed as ‘facts’ never just speak for themselves in history. These can be ambiguous and inconsistent, and the historian always has to decide which ones to “give the floor, and in what order or context”.⁴⁰

³⁸ See Bruce Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Science*, pp. 92-93 for an overview of the coding practice adopted for this dissertation.

³⁹ Minechello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander, *In-Depth Interviewing*, p. 119.

⁴⁰ E.H. Carr, *What Is History: The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 13.

Hence, historians are always involved in interpretation, and a model or theory is required to achieve this. Furthermore, “ every history is enculturated in the systems of values and interests out of which it comes” by both the people telling the story and the storyteller.⁴¹ Historians need to acknowledge their own subject position and ideological assumptions in their interpretations. They also need to appreciate the systems of values, interests and established meanings from which the individuals, communities and identities that they are studying are constituted. This assumes that experience as an explanatory tool of history is never self-evident or self-explanatory. As observed by Joan Scott “experience is at once always already an interpretation of something that needs to be interpreted”.⁴²

Hence, as the researcher I strove for critical awareness through acknowledgement of my own subject position as a white, Australian, middle class, tertiary educated, left and feminist informed academic, lesbian identified and partnered, bisexually attracted, mother of a very young child, aged in her late 30s and with a background in elite swimming as a competitor and a commitment to ‘sport for all’.⁴³ When this doctoral project started I had only recently fallen in love with a women for the first time and the research project itself became part of my journey of discovery within a surprisingly prejudiced mainstream society and a diverse and usually affirming GLBTQI world. The supplementary research method of participant observation, which will be outlined in the next section of this methodology, provided an important

⁴¹ Gregory Denning, *The Bounty: An Ethnographic History*, (Melbourne: University of Melbourne History Department, 1988), p. 98.

⁴² Joan. W. Scott, ‘ The Evidence of Experience’, in H. Abelove, M. Bardale and D. Halperin (eds) *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, p.412.

⁴³ Due to my active involvement in the research process as an observer I have used the first person throughout the thesis. This acknowledges my active agency in the research process.

context to observe and learn about this new and diverse community and communities that spanned GLBTQI life locally, globally and through particular sport and cultural organisations making up the international Gay Games movement. Triangulation through cross checking with the accounts of other interviewees and the archival material was carried out wherever possible to substantiate evidence. Appreciation of organisers and participants subjective positions and affiliations also assisted this process.

Participant Observation

To gain a deeper familiarity with the people, organisations, events and social values and meanings involved with the Gay Games the ethnographic method of participant observation was used. Ethnography essentially “places the researcher in the midst of whatever it is they study” to examine “various phenomena as perceived by participants and represent these observations as accounts”.⁴⁴ Through watching, listening, asking questions, participating in social and formal activities, making notes on observations, formulating hypotheses, making blunders, etc, researchers are gradually immersed in the culture being observed and begin to understand people, structures and social processes.⁴⁵

This research method was supplementary to the three main methods of archival research, oral history interviewing and the use of secondary materials and social theoretical understandings. In fact, the main format this research method took was immersion within the field, observation and the keeping of reflective field notes documenting observations, what they meant and how they made sense within the

⁴⁴ Bruce Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, p. 121.

⁴⁵ Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography. Principles in Practice* (Second Edn) (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.100-101.

context of the material and findings of these other ongoing research methods. Such notes were taken during two critical observation periods. These were the FGG meeting held in Sydney in 1996 and during my participation in Gay Games V. I will also describe, in chronological order, the extent of my immersion within gay and lesbian sport and the international Gay Games movement over the period of researching this thesis. These experiences were also important in shaping my overall understanding of the Gay Games.

The first foray into 'the field' of the Gay Games movement was as an official observer, at the annual meeting of the FGG held in Sydney in September of 1996. I had contacted the Secretary of the FGG as well as the meeting organisers from Team Sydney, informed them of the research project and was granted observer status.⁴⁶ At this meeting a number of research outcomes were achieved including: meeting and getting to know many of the key Gay Games organisers and leaders, arranging and conducting interviews, observing all except the closed sessions of the annual meeting, observing the operations of the FGG Sports Committee and Outreach Committee, socialising with FGG Directors, gaining an initial understanding of the organisational workings, including the aims, values and politics of the FGG and the relationship of the FGG to the Gay Games.

The second immersion in the field occurred during voluntary work on the committee of Team Melbourne – the peak lesbian and gay sport and cultural organisation within Melbourne, Australia. I fulfilled the roles of Team Melbourne Vice President, Australia Gaymes 1998 organiser, annual gay and lesbian Swimming Carnival

⁴⁶ Team Sydney is the peak gay and lesbian sports organisation based in Sydney.

organiser and Team Melbourne representative to the 1997 annual FGG meeting held in Denver, US.⁴⁷ This involvement provided valuable insights into the nature and demands of lesbian and gay sport at the local and city level. I also participated directly in and observed the FGG meeting as part of the successful Sydney 2002 bid team. This FGG meeting selected the site for the 2002 Gay Games and it constituted the fourth main immersion within the field.

The third period of observation and involvement occurred during the main period of travel to conduct and collect interviews. To build rapport and in many cases enjoy new friendships, I socialised with interviewees as well as attended competition and training sessions of a number of gay and lesbian sports. For instance, whilst in San Diego, I swam with the local gay swim team 'Different Strokes'. In San Francisco, I attended a ten-pin bowling competition and a hockey game with one of the founding organisers of the Gay Games, Sara Lewinstein, as well as her family and friends. In London, I met up with the gay and lesbian swim team 'Out To Swim', in the pool and at the pub after training. In Amsterdam, I swam with the local gay swim team, attended the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Dutch Association for Integration of Homosexuals (COC), and observed the day-to-day operations of the Gay Games V office. I also travelled to Rotterdam to discuss gay and lesbian sports issues with the leaders of the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF).

The fourth period of immersion was the most intense. It involved participating and spectating at Gay Games V and attending the FGG annual meeting held just before the Gay Games. Events and activities observed and engaged in directly during this

⁴⁷ See Glossary of terms in Appendix 2 for more details on these organisations and events.

period (July – August 1998) were: assisting Team Melbourne with the preparation of Melbourne based participants attending the Gay Games; socialising with FGG Directors and the president of Team United Kingdom in London just before the Games; participating in an academic conference called ‘Queer Games? Theories, Politics, Sports’, which was hosted by The Departments of Lesbian and Gay Studies of the Universities of Amsterdam, Nijmegen and Utrecht during the week before the Gay Games; participating in the Opening and Closing ceremony of Gay Games V; competing in the swimming at the Gay Games; watching a variety of other sports – softball, figure skating, wrestling, weight lifting, martial arts and athletics; watching Games related events and entertainment such as the canal parade, the outdoor film and choir festival, bands performing around the Town Hall, theatre shows and the women’s festival at Melkweg.⁴⁸ I also witnessed the wedding of lesbian friends at the Grand Hotel Krosnopolski. Generally, I was well placed at various levels to get what could be considered a good sense of the spirit of the Games.

A comprehensive ethnography of Gay Games V would be impossible as so many events, activities and aspects of the Gay Games were happening all at once. I decided to get an overall feel for the Games through observing its key sites and events, as well as attending what interested me most. There was no attempt during any of these observation periods to exhaustively and meticulously observe and record. This would have constituted a doctoral study in itself. Notes were taken at the end of the day and during quiet reflective periods. Seeing the Gay Games first hand placed the research

⁴⁸ I presented at this conference and experienced a supportive, energising and challenging intellectual exchange with other international delegates. The women’s festival is outlined in the *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 18. Archived in VU: CSGGPA.

materials in general and the Amsterdam Games in particular, into a more lively and colourful perspective.

The final observation period covered the primary research of the last chapter of the thesis. I was on the FGG Transgender Policy Task Force, which carried out most of its work on the Internet. Debate on policy and contributions to policy development occurred principally through Internet discussion. The primary responsibility for such policy making resided with the Sydney 2002 Gay Games organisers whilst the FGG Task Force served in an advisory capacity only. However, insight into the policy making process, including the way that the stakeholder communities were consulted, provided useful research outcomes from this involvement.

Background history on the development of transgender participation policy within the FGG and the Gay Games was also sought. This involved contacting key policy makers who had served on the FGG. I also sought the perspectives of transgendered people and organisations. The Gender Centre of Sydney was providing policy advice to the Sydney 2002 organisers, and proved to be a very fruitful source. Another valuable informant was a sports management academic and colleague who had recently gender-transitioned. Discussions with sports law academics with expertise in transgender and sport issues as well as with peak mainstream Australian sports organisations that had developed transgender participation in sport policy, provided important contextual grounding.

The networks established through participation within the FGG and through contacts within the Australian sports management field generally, were valuable resources

informing this chapter. Formal interviews were not conducted during this research phase, however, all informants were briefed on the nature of this research project and the ways that their insights and conversations may be incorporated within the thesis. Contributors were generous in their exchange of knowledge and expertise. Issues of privacy and confidentiality did not arise as the information provided was always of a general rather than a personal nature.

By being immersed within the Gay Games movement and at times taking on an advocacy and leadership role for gay and lesbian sport, I was essentially a complete participant.⁴⁹ Some commentators have suggested that this is as an ideal for researchers. ‘Total immersion’ in the culture under study rather than simply ‘passing’ as a member offers safety, the ability to gain insider knowledge readily and the avoidance of troubles accessing people and information.⁵⁰ However, there are downsides to this approach including continuous maintenance of insider identity, the constraints of rigorous involvement, the difficulties with maintaining critical distance and ethical issues such as the inability to gain informed consent from the people being researched.

Gay Games organisers and FGG members wanted a social history of the Gay Games to be written. During these years of Gay Games movement and research involvement it was well known that I was researching a history of the Gay Games. I was continuously asked about the progress of this project. As ethnographic methods were only supplementary and data collection was basic, general and occurred only at the

⁴⁹ Hammersely and Atkinson, *Ethnography. Principles in Practice*, pp. 103-107.

⁵⁰ Hammersely and Atkinson, *Ethnography. Principles in Practice*, pp. 103-105.

entry point of this research, and during my own Gay Games involvement, intrusion into personal and political issues were kept to a minimum. Role confusion was also minimised with this approach. For instance, there were occasions during immersion when the researcher was ‘wearing a number of hats – for instance, observing the bidding process whilst assisting Sydney with their bid efforts or researching FGG Transgender policy processes whilst being part of this process. The researchers role essentially became an adjunct to the role of bid team member and informed policy advisor in these circumstances. Insider knowledge was gained as background material, and it was not the primary motivation for this involvement. Respect for the integrity and wellbeing of the people and the organisations that were observed during this research has been a guiding principle at all times.

Maintaining critical distance was another issue. This was challenging, especially during the first few years of the project when I was ‘coming out’ and learning about GLBTQI existence and communities on a personal level. Entering a new, exciting and affirming world, living first hand homophobic prejudice and discrimination, seeking personal affirmation and community affiliation are common experiences for recently arrived lesbian women and gay men. Critical distance developed with increasing self awareness, academic and experiential knowledge of the GLBTQI community and through the vigilance of critical friends and the academic supervisors of this project. Critical distance, or what has been termed passionate objectivity, has constantly been a central research goal.⁵¹ This acknowledges the commitment to the Gay Games movement and the project that has been sustained by passion and interest.

⁵¹ Jennifer Hargreaves discussed this term and its usage within ethnography during her keynote address at the Australian Society for Sports History Conference: Sporting Traditions XIV (3-7 July 2003) held in Sydney.

Summary of Thesis Chapters

To appreciate and situate the systems of values, interests, and established meanings from which individuals, communities and identities had been constituted in this research project, the use of social history and social theory was also employed. The main historical and theoretical bodies of knowledge providing this foundation were derived from gender studies, feminist theory, queer theory, and play and leisure theory. Rather than there being an exhaustive literature review at the very beginning of this thesis, each chapter essentially contains an interwoven review of historical and theoretical research and scholarly understanding of the main themes to be addressed.

The thesis is organised thematically and chronologically. It starts with the broader historical context of Western gender/sexuality systems and their relationship to sport. This is achieved in Chapter Two, opened up through the life, struggles and achievements (the dance) of Tom Waddell, the principal visionary and founder of the Gay Games. Chapter Two is entitled “Dancing with Tom Waddell”. Waddell wanted to be a dancer but excelled as an athlete in the most masculine of sports. The ambiguous dance of being gay and masculine in 1950s America was made easier through sport. It was accentuated through dancing and dance, along with the official cultural program, were not significant within the Gay Games until 1990. The historical significance of sport to hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality is explored in this chapter. This is the context for understanding the strongly gendered sports world, the role of sport in the gendering of Western society and the treatment of lesbian and gay sportspeople up until the present day. As the main visionary and founder of the Gay Games Waddell’s dance is significant for the foundation of the

Gay Games themselves. Due to the biographical nature of this chapter, the main characters discussed are usually referred to by their full name or their first name. In the rest of the thesis last names are used when citing particular people.

Chapter Three, entitled “We are normal”, examines the historical and philosophical background to Gay Games I. These include the influence of counter cultural interpretations of leisure and sport in California, the flourishing of gay and lesbian life and the start of gay and lesbian sports organisations during the 1970s and early 80s in San Francisco. The people, events and stories of Gay Games I have their foundation in this history. The first Gay Games were to be called the Gay Olympic Games until the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) exercised what they saw as their legal monopoly on the use of Olympics. Normalisation of gayness through playing sport and making Olympic connections were a strong theme of these Gay Games.

Each Gay Games is contextualised within the host city and county’s lesbian and gay history and contemporary social life. Chapter Four, entitled “We are healthy”, looks at the significant impact of HIV and AIDS on the Gay Games, and especially Gay Games II. These Games were held in one of the epicentre of the HIV/AIDS crisis tragically affecting the gay male community of the US – San Francisco in 1986. A broad understanding of the health benefits of the Gay Games and their groundbreaking policies of inclusion for people living with HIV and AIDS is examined in this chapter. A brief account of the drug testing policies at the Gay Games, and their implications for the inclusion of some HIV positive athletes, is also given at the end of the chapter. The goals of legitimation through mainstream sports

sanctioning can undermine the inclusive principles of the Gay Games. This was brought to a head during the Sydney 2002 Gay Games.

The internationalisation of the Gay Games movement is analysed within the context of diverse sex/gender systems worldwide and the impact of global gay and lesbian identity formation. Chapter Five, entitled “Going global” achieves this in its examination of the internationalisation and commercialisation of the Gay Games movement throughout Gay Games III, IV and V, and the establishment of the FGG. Whilst identity politics was dominant during the Gay Games of the 1980s, the diversity of the GLBTQI communities had given greater emphasis to difference politics during the 1990s. This is also examined in relation to community politics and inclusive policies and practices of the Gay Games, and especially those concerning gender and sexuality.

The final chapter entitled “Transexed Conundrums” re-focuses on sex, gender, sexuality and sport at the Gay Games. The essentialised binaries of male/female, masculinity/femininity and heterosexual/homosexual so prominently displayed, reinforced and conserved in the mainstream sport world do not fit the communities engaged by the Gay Games. The inclusion of transgender and intersex peoples in the sports program of the Games highlights this problematic. Chapter Six explores this issue in-depth, bringing out the major ambiguities and tensions of staging a mass-participatory sport and cultural event that aims to mainstream the diverse GLBTQI communities of the Games whilst at the same time seeks to be radically inclusive. A liberal consumer model of mass program offerings to general and niche groupings or ‘markets’ through regular sport, as well as cultural and human rights events and

activities, is the overriding plan of the Gay Games. The potential of a transformative sports model that would allow more play with the ambiguities and pluralities of sex, gender and sexuality is also explored. Finally, a comparative summary is given of the main ways that sex, gender and sexuality were manifest during each Gay Games. The gender policy of the Sydney 2002 Gay Games demonstrates the complexity of transgender inclusion by being more sensitive to non-Western ways of identifying as transgendered and/or same-sex attracted.

Chapter 2 Dancing with Tom Waddell

Dance: 1. To move with the feet or body rhythmically, especially to music. 2. To leap, skip, shake, agitate, disturb, oscillate, throw, fluctuate, vacillate, seesaw, vibrate, stagger, jerk, quiver, quaver etc., as from excitement or emotion. 3. A successive group of rhythmical steps generally executed to music. 4. A social gathering for dancing. 5. Dance can be metaphoric for festivity, revelry, rejoicing, recreation, enlivening, to drown care, to disport. 6. Postmodern dance is a creation and expression of the performer(s) and the audience. It decentres boundaries, forms, rhythms, props, bodies, identities... 7. "The dance of life".¹

Introduction

One of the founders and visionary leaders of the Gay Games, Tom Waddell, started his athletic career with acrobatics and ballet dancing. Tom loved the physicality, beauty, discipline and creative adventure of ballet. As a teenager during the 1950s he choreographed his own dances. When his adopted mother, Hazel Waddell, could teach him no more he travelled twice a week to nearby Manhattan to receive professional tuition.² Tom also enjoyed athletics and American football. He found that the coordination and strength he developed from ballet could be applied most successfully to his performance in these sports. In fact, he was so convinced in the value of dance that he tried to get his football mates interested. Both the players and their parents found this "too much", too sissy and effeminate, definitely not what football players were all about.³ His brother Arthur had already called Tom a faggot because of his ballet interests, and he already felt uncomfortable about his attraction

¹ Exerts from Arthur Delbridge (ed) *The Concise Macquarie Dictionary* (NSW: Doubleday, 1982), p.308; Roget's Thesaurus (London: Pan Books, 1972), p. 372, and general knowledge.

² Tom Waddell and Dick Schaap, *Gay Olympian: The Life and Death of Dr. Tom Waddell* (New York: Knopf, 1996), pp. 28-29.

³ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 28-29.

to men, his difference, and his queerness. Like most young people he wanted acceptance and lots of friends. Fear of the homosexual stigma associated with dancing eventually got the better of him after a fellow male dancer who appeared very 'effeminate' propositioned him.⁴ In his biography he remembers this incident:

I didn't want to be like that. I didn't want to be effeminate. At that time homosexuals were generally thought of as men who wanted to be women. But I didn't want to be a woman. I liked being male. I liked feeling male... I liked having muscles and strength. I was bothered by the idea that gayness meant femininity. I was confused by it, too.⁵

A young man involved in sport could readily develop popularity, prestige, muscles and strength. Sports such as athletics and football became Tom Waddell's cover and shield. He fully engaged in the aggressiveness of the football field and the braggadocio of the locker-room.⁶ He loved running through players, knocking them down, being tough and unemotional, and he thrived on the competition.⁷ Sport became so important to Tom that he successfully applied to the famous birthplace of a number of modern sports - Springfield College in Massachusetts - to undertake a physical education major and become a coach.⁸ At the age of thirty he represented the US and placed sixth at the Mexico Olympics in the most gruelling of all athletic events - the decathlon. Sport was a successful closet for Tom, where his physical talents could be enjoyed and recognised, his friendships with men cemented and his vulnerable masculinity affirmed. He could achieve all of this whilst doing his nation proud at the most prestigious of world sporting events.

⁴ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 29.

⁵ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 29.

⁶ Michael Messner and Don Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sport: Rethinking Masculinity* (Freedom CA: The Crossing Press, 1994), p. 116.

⁷ Messner and Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sport*, p. 116.

⁸ Waddell transferred from physical education to major in Medicine. Springfield College is considered to be the birthplace of modern basketball and volleyball.

Tom Waddell completed a medical degree and was called up to serve in the United States army as an officer.⁹ During his military service he specialized in global medicine and infectious diseases. Tom also served as a paratrooper and with the Underwater Demolition Team – two of the most macho divisions of the army.¹⁰ It was during his time as an army officer that he trained for the Olympics.¹¹ As a competitive, tough and gifted athlete and a young physician and army officer he held a respectable social position. To all appearances, Tom was heterosexual. However, the dance he performed to stay in this closet was eventually too much.¹² Like most of the few gay and lesbian elite athletes who have ‘come out’, Tom waited until his athletic career was over.

Tom Waddell’s life is emblematic for the following questions this chapter will explore and address. What is the significance of modern sport in the US and many other Western nations, for the understanding of gender and sexuality? How are dramatically embodied expressions such as dance, basketball, football, track and field and other sports gendered? What does this gendering have to do with human sexuality, the enactment of relations of power between men and women, straight and gay, and the expression of national prowess in modern society? What are gender and sexuality and why is there such a fuss over the maintenance of rigid categories and boundaries to these central aspects of human existence? Why can’t we dance with the boundaries and open the closets? Did Tom found an international Gay Games to

⁹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 82-87. Waddell was drafted into the army. He refused to go to Vietnam on political grounds and filed for “relief as a conscientious objector” (p. 87). A few days before he was scheduled to depart for Vietnam Waddell received new orders – to remain at the Walter Reed Hospital as the assistant director of the global-medicine course (p.91).

¹⁰ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 84.

¹¹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 98-105

¹² Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 116 - 118.

enliven this dance in sport? In the latter years of Tom's life, when he was much more comfortable with his homosexuality, he experienced regret that he had not pursued his love of dancing as a career: "See, I grew up thinking that I was the only gay person in the world".e such limiting places.

Tom Waddell's Emblematic Lifestory

Tom Waddell was born Tom Flubacher on November 1, 1937, in St Joseph's Hospital, Paterson, New York. Paterson is a small industrial town founded by Dutch, German, Italian, and Scandinavian immigrants during the 1800s. Tom does not remember his childhood with fondness. His family showed little love towards each other, his parents were poor, and his Germanic ancestry was shaming during a period marked by war and Nazi atrocities.¹⁴ In his biography, Tom speaks of growing up feeling guilty, which he attributes to his Catholic Germanic background:

I believed in heaven and in hell, and everything pleasurable was evil and wrong. We were dirty, horrible creatures who constantly needed to guard against doing anything that would offend God.¹⁵

Certainly adding to this guilt was Tom's early recognition - when he was six or seven years old - of being attracted to and aroused by men. As an acolyte of the Catholic church he built an altar at home so that he could pray "for deliverance from this thing that was afflicting me that I couldn't talk to anybody about".¹⁶ Another difference that caused Tom pain in childhood was his name. This could very well have been one of those defining issues shaping his sense of justice and relationship to others and otherness. Children can be cruel to each other, and especially in times of war, when

¹³ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 115.

¹⁴ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 12-16.

¹⁵ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 16.

¹⁶ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 11.

identifying and naming enemies - Japs, Krauts, Huns, as well as the usual Niggers, Commos, Queers... – can become a patriotic pastime. Having a strange Germanic name such as Flubacher could be readily played upon by his classmates. For a few years after the war Tom Waddell's life became happier and his family were better off financially. However, he still craved acceptance, love and admiration, and he continued to lead a sexual dance of excitement, fear, shame and confusion.

Tom's earliest sexual experiences illustrate the complexities of this dance. From an early age they involved sexual experimentation with other boys. Most of these boys would grow up with heterosexual identities. Sexual fantasy, sexual behaviour, sexual preference and sexual identity are different, although related, phenomena.¹⁷ Tom reports in his biography that these encounters caused him great shame and fear that he was 'sick'. Without even being aware of the term homosexuality young children still know 'it' is bad. During his thirteenth year Tom had a school friend with whom he shared oral sex. In their way of thinking they didn't consider themselves queer because they never came in each other's mouths. This playing with each other was simply enjoyable. But it stopped when another boy from school told Tom that the news was out about his giving of such elicited pleasures. He was ashamed and betrayed, fearful of being publicly labelled a queer. He also responded quickly to the boy's accusation, stating that he was the receiver not the giver, the penetrator not the

¹⁷ For instance, the incidence of male rape in prisons, which is usually perpetrated by heterosexual identified men, is thought to assert dominance and hierarchical power. Married men who do not identify at all as gay are known to be a significant grouping that use "beats" for casual homosexual sexual encounters. These are instances of homosexual acts - behaviours - by heterosexually identified men. One may enjoy occasional sexual fantasies involving heterosexual sex scenes, played out in the mind, and still identify as homosexual and prefer homosexual sex and relationships. A person may also prefer sexual and emotional relations with members of the same gender but not identify overtly - to others or even oneself - as homosexual. See Haralambos, van Krieken, Smith and Holborn, *Sociology. Themes and perspectives. Australian edition* (South Melbourne: Longmans, 1999), pp. 475-485 for a basic overview of the social construction of human sexuality. Also see Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1991).

penetrated.¹⁸ Perhaps Tom knew that the passive, feminine positioning was considered much worse in this context.

Tom's sexual attraction to men became more defined with age and experience. He got pleasure from looking at men's bodies, although he tried to be straight and dated girls. As a teenager trying to prove his manhood, he found the popular game of how far you could get sexually with girls and bragging about it later as "pretty ridiculous".¹⁹ He continued to date girls during his twenties and nearly married two of his serious girlfriends Bea Brown and Quenby Sameth.²⁰ At this time Tom was also enjoying his first passionate and spiritual homosexual relationship with a man considerably older than himself. He spoke to neither Bea or Quenby about his homosexuality, intoning to them that marriage may not work because he was not in love with them, only loved them.²¹ The initial belief that marriage would allow him to "get over" his feelings for men was undermined by his knowledge of the growing strength of these feelings. He couldn't deceive himself. His vacillating and uncertain dance of love, sexual passion and commitment to Quenby proved the final straw to their relationship.²² This difficult dance draws others into its orbit, affecting many of the friendships and loving relationships of the gay person that exist in a hostile and denying world.

Enge Menaker, Tom's first passionate love, ran a camp mostly for educated, middle class New York Jewish children. Tom taught physical education and sport activities at the camp and fell under the spell of Enge, the very social socialist, multi-linguist,

¹⁸ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 22.

¹⁹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 11.

²⁰ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 68 and pp. 91-93.

²¹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 57-71.

²² Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 94-95.

writer, adventurer and charismatic weaver of stories and teacher of life. One of the most significant things Tom learnt from Enge was that it was alright to be in love and enjoy sex with a man, and that he wasn't strange and alone in this. However, Enge belonged to a generation that lived a very closeted existence - you could express and enjoy your illicit love in private but you were never to admit it publicly.²³ Tom was also impressed by Enge's teachings on politics and society. As a result he went from Republican to radical left during the 1960s, worked for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors whilst at Medical School and ran a clinic for the Black Panthers.²⁴ This marked the start of Tom's forays into civil and later gay rights politics, of which the foundation of the Gay Games was a culminating event.

It was not until after his university, military and athletic career, during his mid-thirties, that Tom was sure enough of himself and his "marriage" with Charles Deaton, that he made his homosexuality public. This coming out occurred in an article appearing in one of the world's most popular publications, *People* magazine.²⁵ Tom wanted to shatter a few gay stereotypes and say that it was acceptable to be homosexual. He wrote to all of his family and important friends before the article appeared, telling them that he was acknowledging his homosexuality publicly. He did not want to surprise them in such a public forum.

Tom lived with Charles in San Francisco, a city known for its apparent freedom of sexual expression and vibrant gay community and culture. Like a number of gay men

²³ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 66.

²⁴ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 76. The Black Panthers were a militant Black Rights organisation based in the USA. The Vietnam War was also a central concern during the 1960s.

²⁵ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 124-127. It appeared in the October 1976 edition of *People*. According to Tom's biography he had come out in the gay press earlier that year.

in relationships, Charles and Tom had an open arrangement. As long as they were committed primarily to each other, it was accepted that either party could enjoy casual sexual liaisons with other men. Tom enjoyed the gay male bath houses for 'recreational sex', making the most of his strong sense of liberation. In spite of the sexual freedom, in full bloom during the 1970s, the arrangement was full of tension primarily because Charles liked to bring some of his lovers home. This upset Tom and due to this and a number of other factors they eventually split up. The freedom of this gay sexual dance can produce emotional complexity and turbulence as well as expressive exuberance and release.

Through the first two Gay Games, which were held in 1982 and 1986, Tom met the last two loves of his life. He developed a deep and loving relationship with a major entertainment producer who also worked on the Games - Zohn Artman. He also developed a deep friendship with Sara Lewinstein, a lesbian who was on the Board of Directors and a key sports organiser for Gay Games I and II.²⁶ Working on a Gay Games was intense and absorbing. A common mission and passion joined organisers. One of these missions was to bring the men's and women's communities together through the Games.²⁷ Sara was well connected within the lesbian community of San Francisco, and one of the first women to get involved in Games organisation.

Sara Lewinstein was impressed with Tom's genuine concern for women's rights, his warmth and humanity. Their friendship blossomed and one day Sara asked Tom if he had ever considered having children. They had a child named Jessica together, and

²⁶ Interview with Sara Lewinstein, San Francisco, November 1996.

²⁷ Interview with Lewinstein.

eventually married. Sara's partner, Chris Martineli, and Tom's partner, Zohn, were also enmeshed in the early part of Jessica's life. Making a gay family such as this was pioneering for this time. The prominence of Tom and Sara within their respective gay male and women's communities of San Francisco made these human relationships and arrangements even more noticeable and questioned. The notion of 'family' was being re-defined, boundaries were being challenged and crossed, making members of both the straight and lesbian/gay communities anxious.²⁸ Tom, Sara and all their significant others had to negotiate these new configurations of relationships, of sexuality, of family roles and meanings.

Tragically, like so many gay men living in San Francisco at this time, Tom and Zohn contracted HIV and developed AIDS. Tom died just before Jessica's fourth birthday, eleven months after the second Gay Games.²⁹

Tom's emotional and sexual coming-out narrative appears to have followed the pattern of many gay men living through the latter half of the twentieth century. There are feelings of desire for and strong emotional connectedness with the same sex, followed by shame, denial and sublimation of this desire. During adolescence, confusion and uncertainty with sexuality can often reign - liking to be with girls/women, conforming to the overwhelming heterosexual social expectations, but not feeling right and unable to commit. The making of powerful and emotional relationships with another man/men can also mark this period. The acknowledgement of sexuality and social identity as a gay man can often follow this significant

²⁸ Interview with Lewinstein. Also see Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 171.
²⁹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 222.

relationship(s). This acknowledgement is made to self and significant others, and discovery, enthusiastic exploration and immersion in a new life especially within the gay sub-culture often follow. Finally many gay men gradually grow into and consolidate their gay identity.

When written in this manner these ‘coming out’ stages appear linear, clear cut and straightforward. However, Tom’s story seems to reflect the tensions produced from dancing in a space where so many traditional boundaries are challenged, crossed and redrawn. His was not a linear dance, and in many ways Tom was never free of the ambiguities of sexuality, of manhood and being gay, and of family life and being gay. The diversity of human sexuality, its very centrality to human life and relationships and its slipperiness make it so significant in life’s dance. The solidification of the social identity of being gay that has occurred especially since the 1960s certainly gave Tom a surer footing.³⁰

Tom actually had his own theory concerning the nature of human sexuality. He saw it as a spectrum, not an either/or scenario. Some people were very homosexual or very heterosexual and could be located at the polar ends of this spectrum, with the rest situated somewhere along this spectrum. Pioneering sexologist Alfred Kinsey had developed such a continuum through researching the sexual lives of tens of thousands of Americans during the 1950s and 1960s.³¹ In his biography Tom describes his

³⁰ Robert Connell encompasses these stages of ‘coming out’ as prehistory, preparation, contact, acknowledgement, immersion and consolidation. He also comments that gayness is so reified now that this process of adopting a social definition is usually experienced as a discovery of a central truth about oneself. R.W.Connell, *Masculinities* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1995), pp. 151-152.

³¹ A.C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy and C. E. Martin, *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948) and A.C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy, C. E. Martin and P.H. Gebhard, *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1953). There were seven sexual

attraction, desire and love for women and his much more intense attraction, desire and loving of men. Tom's conceptualisation and discussion of this spectrum appears to have come at a time when he was more relaxed, self-assured and self-knowing. How does this brief story of Tom's sexuality contribute to our understanding of this central term in relation to the Gay Games?

Sexuality and Social Theory

Elizabeth Grosz, has some rich insights concerning "this slippery and ambiguous term" that can shed light on this question. Grosz gives four different senses in which sexuality may be understood. I like her definition because it encompasses the various ways we know and use this term on an everyday basis and it incorporates the body as the central site of sexuality.³² As a difference feminist Grosz is concerned with human embodiment, of what bodies do whilst understanding that this doing is an open question:

First, sexuality can be understood as a drive, an impulse or form of propulsion, directing a subject towards an object. Secondly, sexuality can be understood in terms of an act, a series of practices and behaviours involving bodies, organs and pleasures, usually, but not always involving orgasm. Third, sexuality can also be understood in terms of identity. The sex of bodies, now commonly described by the term gender, designates at least two different forms, usually understood by the binary opposition of male and female. And fourth, sexuality commonly refers to a set of orientations, positions and desires, which implies that there are particular ways in which the desires, differences, and bodies of subjects can seek their pleasure.³³

orientations on the Kinsey scale, starting from asexual. Kinsey placed the majority of people he had studied within the middle of this continuum. Only a minority were exclusively homosexual or heterosexual in their erotic attraction and sexual behaviour.

³² *The Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) definition of sexual is two fold: "Of sex, a sex, or the sexes; intercourse, copulation; mutual attraction of two individuals of the opposite sex" (pp.1165). Jeffery Weekes notes that the term sex refers to an act, to a category of person, to a practice and to a gender. In J. Weeks, *Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1991).

³³ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward A Corporeal Feminism* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994), p. viii.

Grosz also discusses the ways that sexuality cannot be readily contained. As a drive it can render even the non-desiring - celibacy - as sexual. She describes its leaking into apparently unrelated drive activities, such as sublimation in one's work, creative activity or sport. Even as a set of behaviours sexuality "seeks more than it needs, performs excessive actions, and can draw any object, any fantasy, any number of subjects and combinations of their organs into its circuits of pleasure".³⁴ In relation to sexually specific bodies - male and female - sexuality shapes and is determining of practically all activities of the sexes and the understandings of our world that go well beyond the parameters of the sexual. This includes even the supposedly value free and scientific conceptualisation of sexual difference itself because in the context of power structures of our history, male bodies have largely been the authorities of knowledge. As Grosz argues:

Our conceptions of reality, knowledge, truth, politics, ethics, and aesthetics are all effects of sexually specific - and thus far in our history, usually male - bodies, and are all thus implicated in the power structures which feminists have described as patriarchal, the structures which govern the relations between the sexes.³⁵

One thing stands out by juxtaposing Tom Waddell's brief sexual life story and Grosz's conceptualisation of the way we deploy sexuality in contemporary society - why all the traumatic dancing? If we take the variety of ways sexuality is expressed in contemporary society, the actual choice of sexual partner according to gender preference is only one scenario. The popularly held interpretation of the purpose of sexuality - the instinct or attraction of one sex to the other for the ultimate function of reproducing the human species - is a very narrow one. This is the widespread assumption entrenched in the major social institutions like the church, the nuclear

³⁴ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. viii.

³⁵ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, p. ix.

family, the courts, the workplace, the media and education, upon which the supposed naturalness and superiority of heterosexuality is based. Human sexuality can be thought of as much richer, with more potential than simply animal reproduction.

Heterosexism

Heterosexism is the “belief in the superiority of heterosexuals or heterosexuality evidenced in the exclusion, by omission or design, of non-heterosexual persons in policies, procedures, events, or activities” - essentially the central cultural landscape of society.³⁶ Gregory Herek, describes it as “one component of the broader and overlapping ideologies of sexuality and gender”.³⁷ Herek describes two manifestations of heterosexism: the first, cultural heterosexism, is the denial, stigmatisation or denigration of the non-heterosexual in cultural institutions; and the second, psychological heterosexism, is the personal internalisation of this world view and its expression in antigay prejudice, discrimination and violence.³⁸

Lesbian feminist academic and poet Adrienne Rich, in her famous essay ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, provocatively outlines the particular implications of heterosexism for women in general and lesbians in particular.³⁹ Rich discusses the ways that mainstream feminist scholarship has largely been silent on, or has essentially ‘erased’ lesbian existence by its “failure to examine

³⁶ James Sears and Walter Williams (eds), *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia. Strategies That Work* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 16.

³⁷ Gregory Herek, ‘The Context of Anti-Gay Violence: Notes on Cultural and Psychological Heterosexism’, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 5, no.3, p. 319.

³⁸ Gregory Herek, *The Context of Anti-Gay Violence*, p. 319. Sears also discusses Herek’s conceptualisation of heterosexism.

³⁹ Adrienne Rich, ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’ in Henry Abelove, Michele Barale and David Halperin (eds) *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 227-254.

heterosexuality as a political institution which disempowers women”.⁴⁰ Rich starts from the premise that there are strong pre-historic bonds between mothers and daughters and rich, woman-focused relationships between women in practically all societies. These women-centred relations have been disturbed and denied by the power and interests of men. She catalogues the variety of powerful means by which men have dominated and controlled women, their sexuality, their labour, their children, as well as their freedom of expression, knowledge and movement.⁴¹

Rich develops a radical feminist perspective, arguing that this gender oppression is the principal model of all other forms of “exploitation and control” in human societies.⁴² After examining a number of key feminist texts she states that:

The assumption that ‘most women are innately heterosexual’ stands as a theoretical and political stumbling block for feminism. It remains a tenable assumption partly because lesbian existence has been written out of history or catalogued under disease, partly because it has been treated as exceptional rather than intrinsic, partly because to acknowledge that for women heterosexuality may not be a preference at all but something that has had to be imposed, managed, organised, propagandised and maintained by force is an immense step to take if you consider yourself freely and ‘innately’ heterosexual.⁴³

Rich is also critical of the ways lesbians are often seen as female versions of male homosexuals, suffering from heterosexism and homophobia in the same ways as gay men. This also acts to ‘erase female reality’ and the qualitative differences between men and women including women’s lesser economic and cultural privilege and sexual/relationship differences.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Rich, ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, p. 229.

⁴¹ Rich, ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, pp. 233-234.

⁴² Radical feminism emerged as a significant branch of second wave feminism during the 1970s.

⁴³ Rich, ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, p. 238.

⁴⁴ Rich, ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, p. 239. At the same time she acknowledges the oppression suffered by gay men.

One of the most provocative and enduring insights of ‘Compulsory heterosexuality’ was the idea that lesbianism was a shared, political and social identity of which all women could belong. Rich envisaged that women existing on a lesbian continuum characterised by the bonds and shared experiences of womanhood and in opposition to the power of men.⁴⁵ Accordingly, such women-centric and affirming discourse and relations would contest the power of men in patriarchal, male-identified societies.

Critics of Rich have been concerned by the dilution of the erotic and sexual in lesbian and in heterosexual relations, the different social positions of lesbians and heterosexuals and the importance of other key factors “maintaining patriarchal power such as the state and the economy”.⁴⁶ Her emphasis on the unity and like interests of all women is also problematic. Major disparities in power and privilege based on differences of socio-economic class and race need to be accounted for. However, her ideas on ‘ compulsory heterosexuality ’ extend and deepen the definitions of heterosexism used by gay scholars such as Herek by accounting for the impact of sexual inequality. Rich contributed significantly to the development of the radical lesbian feminist perspective that was prominent within many lesbian communities within the west during the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Rich, ‘ Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, p. 240.

⁴⁶ See A. Ferguson, J. Zita and K. Addelson, ‘ On “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”’: Defining Issues’ in N. Keohane, M. Rosaldo and B. Gelpi (eds) *Feminist Theory* (Brighton: Harvest Press, 1982) especially page 159.

⁴⁷ See Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1992), pp. 211-212. Along with many other lesbians Rich advocated the creation of a ‘self-defined, self-loving, woman-identified culture’ (p. 212).

Since the 1990s there has been significant theoretical debate concerning the connections between gender and sexuality in general and the significance of heterosexuality in particular.⁴⁸ Judith Butler, for example, places heterosexuality centre stage as the basis of conventional gender identity and performance.⁴⁹ By constantly ‘doing’ heterosexuality and embodying the naturalized, taken for granted and constantly produced identities of male and female that are the basis of this heterosexuality, gendered identity boundaries delimiting socially acceptable and permitted gender norms and behaviours are produced.

According to Butler we perform gender, constantly, repetitively and non-voluntaristically so that “bodily gestures, movements and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self”.⁵⁰ Hence, for Butler, we ‘do’ heterosexuality, gayness, lesbianism, straightness etc. Furthermore, the binaries of gender and sexuality can be subverted through parodic drag, opening up a world of multiple genders and sexualities.⁵¹ Most theorists engaged in this debate agree that heterosexuality is continually constructed, sustained and lived at the institutional level and through everyday sexual and social life: “most of the population ‘do’

⁴⁸ Some of the key feminists and Queer theorists engaged in this debate are Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and ‘Imitation and gender insubordination’, in Diana Fuss (ed.), *Inside/Out* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 13-31; Diana Fuss, *Inside/Out, Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (New York: Routledge, 1991) Chrys Ingraham, ‘The heterosexual imaginary’, in S. Seidman (ed.) *Queer Theory/ Sociology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp.168-93; Lynne Segal, *Straight Sex: The Politics of Pleasure* (London: Virago, 1994) and ‘Feminist sexual politics and the heterosexual predicament’, in L. Segal (ed.) *New Sexual Agendas* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 77-89.

⁴⁹ Judith Butler, ‘Imitation and Gender Insubordination’, pp. 13-31.

⁵⁰ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 140.

⁵¹ Butler, ‘Imitation and Gender Insubordination’.

heterosexuality everyday without reflecting critically on that doing”. And ‘doing’ heterosexuality is also about ‘doing gender’ – continually and re-affirmingly.⁵²

Tom Waddell recognised and incorporated from an early age the elementary connections of his central performance of being male, of being promised prestige and power from this maleness, with the dominant cultural scripts of appropriate masculine (hetero)sexuality. He used another dramatically embodied and passionately engaged pursuit - that of sport - to express and reinforce his masculinity. Here we see sex seeping into an apparently unrelated activity. For many years sport was Tom’s closet, his way of constructing a masculine and heterosexual athletic identity because he feared being found out as gay.⁵³ In this context, sexual identity is not what you are, rather it is what you do. Sexuality is a performance that doesn’t have to involve having sex at all.⁵⁴ By doing heterosexuality through excelling in the most celebrated masculine sports of his society Tom could link himself with the systems of heterosexual male power, status and privilege.

The centrality that sexuality has taken in the making of our identity - as homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, straight, gay, lesbian, queer, criminally and psychologically deviant, normal and well adjusted - is relatively recent. I will briefly outline the history of this development and its relationship to gender, power and pleasure in the

⁵² Stevi Jackson, ‘Heterosexuality, Heteronormativity and Gender Hierarchy: Some Reflections on Recent Debates’, in Jeffery Weeks, Janet Holland and Matthew Waites, *Sexualities and Society. A Reader* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 80.

⁵³ A number of the gay men interviewed as part of this history of the Gay Games indicated that they had also used sport as an effective closet.

⁵⁴ Michael Messner makes this point of Waddell’s masculine heterosexual performance through excelling in macho sports very well in his illuminating paper ‘Studying Up on Sex’, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, vol. 13, no.3 (1995), pp. 221-238.

west during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to illuminate Tom's traumatic dancing.

Sexuality, Gender, Power and Pleasure in the West During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

Same-sex desire has existed in many societies throughout history. In ancient Greece sexual relationships between adolescent males and their older teachers, mentors and patricians was celebrated. Whilst most of the documented history of same-sex desire concentrates on men, woman to woman sexual and loving relations are also documented in Western society.⁵⁵ Periods of relative tolerance toward same-sex attraction and sexual behaviour, and periods of significant repression and intolerance toward homosexuality, have occurred throughout the history of Western civilization.⁵⁶ It wasn't until the late nineteenth century that the categories homosexuality and heterosexuality were used and a corresponding primary identity based on these categories became solidified. This categorisation was related to some of the most significant transformations occurring in the history of the west brought about by industrialisation.

⁵⁵ In the early days of Christianity the term "sodomite" was applied to any person that engaged in "unusual sexual acts". Boswell points out that in the early Middle Ages sodomy was regarded as less sinful and hence, punishable, than adultery. Boswell's research into the works of one prominent theologian of this time, Hincmar of Reims, reveals that same - sex desire and relations between women was recognised as existing. See John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Also see Barbara Creed, 'Lesbian Bodies. Tribades, Tomboys and Tarts'. in Elizabeth Grosz and Elsybeth Probyn (eds) *Sexy Bodies. The Strange Carnalities of Feminism* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁵⁶ See for instance the rich histories of same-sex behaviour and desire in Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (eds) *Hidden From History. Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, (London: Penguin Books, 1989).

Industrialisation, the dramatic growth of cities, significant social transformation of the roles of men and women, imperialism, the rise of mass media and new medical discourses have been viewed as the main contributors to a growing discourse on, and concern for sexuality during the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Barbara Taylor demonstrates in her book *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, how the changes in work and family relations brought about by the industrial revolution, including the earning of independent wages by women and their entry into occupations traditionally fulfilled by men, caused considerable social and political anxiety around issues of gender identity and gender hierarchies.⁵⁸

By the mid-nineteenth century in America, a women's political movement arose which fought for women's right to divorce, to have abortions and to vote. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, women's movements were also active in England and Australia.⁵⁹ Middle class women fought for the right to university education and a place within the professions such as medicine and law. The English suffragettes fought passionate battles with the authorities to push for basic voting rights for women. This challenged men's prerogative as head of 'their' households to represent women in 'their' families in what was strongly regarded as 'their' domain - the public sphere.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ted Crossett, 'Masculinity, Sexuality and the Development of Early Modern Sport' in Michael Messner and Don Sabo (eds), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order. Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Illinois: Human Kinetic Books, 1992), pp. 46-48.

⁵⁸ Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

⁵⁹ See Carol Bacchi, 'First-Wave Feminism: History's Judgement' in Norma Grieve and Patricia Grimshaw (eds), *Australian Women Feminist Perspectives* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 156-168.

⁶⁰ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890 - 1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), pp. 111-113.

Struggles over social roles and power in gender relations were not isolated to ‘the women question’ or the public arena. Historian Marilyn Lake suggests that there was also a struggle over the appropriate model of Australian masculinity - and concomitantly - Australian national identity - at this time.⁶¹ First wave feminists and members of the temperance movement aligned to advocate a vision of manliness invested with domestic responsibility. However, famous poets and writers such as C.J Dennis, Banjo Patterson and Henry Lawson and the influential *Bulletin* eulogised and mythologised the roughly hewn, independent and resourceful white Australian frontier male, the bushman as well as the urban larrikin. Similar questioning of the personal freedoms and privileges of all classes of men occurred in other Western centres.⁶²

George Chauncey describes the impact on middle class men of major economic and social transformations in the US in the late nineteenth century.⁶³ Through the rise of large corporations many middle class men lost their economic independence, as they became employees of other more successful men. Historian Anthony Rotundo observed that the successful businessman “was the man who submitted to the fewest others”.⁶⁴ The kind of work the majority of middle class men undertook in these new corporations was sedentary, fragmented and lacked the prospects of advancement. Women gradually took up positions (usually lower) in these corporations seeming to

⁶¹ Marilyn Lake, ‘The Politics of Respectability; The Masculinist Context’ *Historical Studies* (April, 1986), pp. 116-131.

⁶² See Patricia Vertinsky, ‘ Making and Marking Gender: Bodybuilding and the Medicalisation of the Body from One Century’s End to Another’, *Culture, Sport, Society*, vol. 2., no. 1 (Spring 1999), pp. 1-24, for an illuminating discussion of widespread social anxiety over the boundaries of gender, sexuality and ‘ real masculinity’ within Western cities at the turn of the nineteenth and also the twentieth centuries.

⁶³ Chauncey, *Gay New York*. p. 111.

⁶⁴ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), quoted in Chauncey, *Gay New York*.

‘feminise’ the culture of the corporate world and hence diminish its masculine status. The physical work of working class men and the new immigrants at least endowed them with an elemental manliness. Women also took up the majority of teaching positions in primary and secondary schools, which created anxiety that boys and young men would be brought up as ‘sissies’. A preoccupation with the overcivilising influences of women, threats to manhood and the consequent quest for manhood was very noticeable in many Western countries at this time.⁶⁵

This was also a period of empire building, jingoistic nationalism and social Darwinist concerns for the health and vigour of the great white populations. Writing about the *fin de siecle* in Europe, Elaine Showalter locates the 1880s and 1890s as decades of “sexual anarchy, when laws that governed sexual identity and behaviour seemed to be breaking down”. She incisively observes that:

It is precisely in periods of cultural insecurity, where there are fears of regression and degeneration, that the longing for strict border controls around definitions of gender as well as race, class, and nationality, becomes especially intense.⁶⁶

By the late nineteenth century forces of resistance to these incursions into masculinist power and privilege had gained ascendancy. They were especially effective in deploying dominant quasi-scientific and medical discourses to justify sharp distinctions between the natural capacities and spheres of life for men and women. Science was posited as a biological determinism giving inevitability to the hierarchical social arrangements of gender, race and sexuality. This biological

⁶⁵ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, pp. 114-115.

⁶⁶ Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle* (New York: Viking Press, 1990), p. 3.

determinism was embedded in the supposed natural and immutable body. Historians Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg observed of this period that:

Would - be scientific arguments were used in the rationalization and legitimisation of almost every aspect of Victorian life, with particular vehemence in those areas in which social change implied stress in existing social arrangements.⁶⁷

In brief, women were believed to be by nature physically and rationally inferior to men. The supposed fragility of (bourgeois) women, their unsuitability for vigorous intellectual (university education) and physical (sport) endeavour was related to the fragility of their reproductive organs. Contrasting this weakness of women was the biological superiority of men. Men could take on the 'hurly burly' public world whilst bourgeoisie women were to ensure that the home was made a place of comfort and nurturance for children and a haven for the male head of the household. This dominant ideology was infused with the notion of sexuality.

Foucault is famous for turning the view of Victorian society as prudish and disinterested in sexuality on its head. In his seminal *History of Sexuality* he documents and discusses an increased interest in sexual matters, promoted by three interrelated developments.⁶⁸ These were the sciences (medicine, psychiatry), which made sexuality central; the systems of power regulating and policing sexuality (criminal justice system, social welfare policy and education) and the increasing fact that

⁶⁷ Charles Rosenberg and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, 'The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Women', *Journal of American History*, no 60 (1973), p. 332. Also quoted in Chauncey, *Gay New York*, p. 121. Also see C. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Knopf, 1985), Thomas. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), and Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 44-50 for a full discussion of this biological determinism of sex/gender differences.

⁶⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) Translated by R. Hurley.

individuals themselves came to recognise themselves “as subjects of this sexuality”. In the nineteenth century one’s sex and proper sexual practice became the central truth of one’s being. To be successful and powerful in this society it was held that a man had to be self-made through discipline, courage, healthy living and resourcefulness. Poverty was the consequence and the fault of those who were lazy, perverse, squanderers of their vitality and seed, lacking in virtue - lacking in manliness. It was believed that respectable middle-class women had no natural sexual feelings. Chastity, modesty, passivity and obedience to the male head of the household (father or husband) defined true womanhood. The male and female homosexual was identified in medical discourse of this time as a personality type, a biological and sexual perversion, in short, a particular ‘species’ of human being.⁶⁹

This medical ‘discovery’ of the homosexual as a perversion post-dated the actual existence of people who had a primary sexual and loving relationship with members of the same sex.⁷⁰ Social networks of gay men appear to have existed in English Molly Houses of the 1700s as well as in France and the Netherlands.⁷¹ They existed for both lesbians and gay men in the US and France in the late 1800s. Urvashi Vaid points out that the first backlash against homosexuality, orchestrated through public morality campaigns, police crackdowns on homosexual solicitation and the enforcement of anti-sodomy laws, also occurred at this time in Europe. This backlash

⁶⁹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, pp. 43-44.

⁷⁰ For the purposes of brevity I will refer to people with this primary attraction as gay or lesbian even though these terms were not used at this time as a form of self-identity.

⁷¹ See for instance Randolph Trumbach, ‘The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality on Modern Culture’, 1660-1750’, in Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (eds), *Hidden From History. Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), pp. 120-140.

was made most public in the conviction of Oscar Wilde in 1895 on charges of “gross indecency”.⁷²

Not all homosexuals were cowed by this persecution, as exemplified by the first homosexual rights organisation founded in Germany in 1897 by doctor Magnus Hirshfield. In a fascinating history of the gay male community in New York City during the period 1890 - 1940 Chauncey captures the life of a visible, vibrant and complex gay world that existed alongside and within the straight working class communities of the Bowery, Greenwich Village and Harlem.⁷³ In fact, Chauncey’s historiography puts into question the primacy Foucault places on the role of nineteenth - century medical discourse in the construction of the modern homosexual. Whilst playing an important role the actual existence of this vibrant gay culture and the construction and relations of gender identity, sexuality and social class at this time, were more fundamentally important. Homosexual desire was related directly to the socio-cultural and class meaning of femininity and manhood.

The ‘Fairy’

There were two main lived expressions of same sex male desire at this time: the highly visible, effeminate ‘fairy’, and the more middle class masculine male who desired men, known then as ‘queer’.⁷⁴ The ‘fairy’ acted as the despised ‘other’ to which normal male sexuality was defined. Middle class queers also rejected the traditional femininity of the fairy and blamed antigay hostility on them. This is

⁷² Urvashi Vaid, *Virtual Equality. The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995), p. 39.

⁷³ Chauncey, *Gay New York*.

⁷⁴ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, chapter 4.

reminiscent of the hostility expressed by relatively conservative gay men today. A frustrated queer of the early 1930s laments the way the more visible and flamboyant fairy had come to define homosexuality in general at this time:

As the cultured, distinguished conservative Jew or Negro loathes and deprecates his vulgar, socially unacceptable stereotype, plenty of whom unfortunately are all too visible...so does their homosexual counterpart resent *his* caricature in the flaming faggot...The general public (make no distinction), and the one is penalized and ostracized for the grossness and excesses of the other.⁷⁵

The 'fairy' as a cultural type was based in more working class areas of New York City and whilst there were also working class 'queers', the brashness and apparent vulgarity of the 'fairy' also acted as working class markers. Contrasting this the 'queer' persona tended to embody more middle class markers such as a "preference for privacy, self-restraint and lack of self-disclosure" as well as being highly mannered and sophisticated.⁷⁶ Hence gender styles were read in terms of class status and vice versa. Gay cultural styles could be 'recast' as a strategy of protection from suspicion and marginalisation through the adoption of middle-class values. There were quite distinct differences along class lines as to what constituted real manliness.

In fact, Chauncey is one of the first historians to argue that at the end of the nineteenth century, it wasn't only homosexuality that was invented as a personality type - based on an understanding of gender inversion. It's binary opposition, the heterosexual, was also used for the very first time in medical discourse and most importantly in the way people came to understand their sexuality - their truth - as normal, natural or despised 'other'. The angst created by women's changing roles and influence in society, the

⁷⁵ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, pp. 105-106.

⁷⁶ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, p. 106.

concern that boys and men were being over-civilised and sissified, the competition between middle class men and working class men over the definition of what was truly manly and especially the high visibility of the fairy were some of the main historical forces producing this binary of heterosexual/homosexual that we take for granted as 'truth' of our sexual personhood today. Chauncey's observations concerning the role of the fairy are instructive:

...the fairy also provoked a high degree of anxiety and scorn amongst middle-class men because he embodied the very things middle-class men most feared about their gender status. His effeminacy represented in extreme form the loss of manhood middle-class men most feared in themselves, and his style seemed to undermine their efforts to shore up their manly status. His womanlike manner challenged the supposed immutability of gender differences by demonstrating that anatomical males did not inevitably become men and were not inevitably different from women. ...The overtness of the fairy's sexual interest in men was even more unsettling, because it raised the possibility of a sexual component in other men's interactions.⁷⁷

It can be seen from this analysis how heterosexuality became so emphasised in middle-class men's lives as a means to demonstrate their manliness. The ability to produce and support children, to be the sexual initiator and aggressor, and to exercise self-control and control over the sexuality of females in their families were all markers of manliness. The medical discourse of this time that propounded biological determinism to account for separate and hierarchically ordered spheres of the two sexes also had to account for the physiognomy of the homosexual and the fairy.⁷⁸ Within this biological determinism, medical experts considered the fairy largely as an invert - a she in a man's body. These men who desired men and appeared effeminate were not real men - rather they were some kind of hermaphrodite, incorporating both male and female biologies. Masculine men who desired other masculine men were

⁷⁷ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, p. 115.

⁷⁸ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, pp. 46-48.

considered ‘perverts’ because they perverted their normal sex drive. Their morality and physiology was also considered deficient.⁷⁹ This pathologising of the homosexual became imbedded in medical practice, psychology, religion and general societal belief systems, and it wasn’t until 1974 that it was taken out of the American Psychiatric Associations list of “sociopathic personality disturbances”.⁸⁰ However, the association of homosexuality with some form of gender-inversion is still common in contemporary societal stereotyping.⁸¹

The history and social control of same-sex desire amongst women in Western societies of the late nineteenth century was also bound up with the patriarchal gender order of this period. Respectable middle-class Victorian women were thought to have no natural sexual desires; they were passive and reticent in such matters. This belief may explain why laws against male homosexuality were enacted and enforced, whilst similar laws for women were not even considered.⁸² Throughout most of the nineteenth century close friendships between women were expected, even praised and commended socially, as long as these women were the gentle, passive and feminine ‘creatures’ that ‘true womanhood’ prescribed. Whilst women seeking higher education and a profession in the colleges and universities opened to them in America, Europe and England were questioned by numerous doctors on their health and suitability to intellectual endeavours, these women certainly had ample opportunity and support to establish close same-sex friendships. Faderman makes the point that above 50% of American college women between 1880 and 1900 remained

⁷⁹ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, pp. 121-122.

⁸⁰ John Macionis, *Sociology*, (Fourth Edn)(New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1993), p. 351.

⁸¹ Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2001), p. 89.

⁸² See B. Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.153.

single and many paired to establish single-sex households.⁸³ Life-long romantic friendships such as these were not thought of as lesbian, and it is hard to gauge how 'sexual' they were.⁸⁴ Such women did trail blaze new professions for women and enjoyed financial and social independence from men.

'Mannish' Lesbians

It was the challenges to the male sphere brought by first wave feminists, social reformers and the popularisation of sexology in the post World War One period that brought these romantic friendships into disrepute and created widespread fear of lesbianism. Women who sought inroads into the public and more socially powerful sphere of the nineteenth century man often were the objects of physicians' scorn. Some doctors described such women as "biological misfits and inverts".⁸⁵ Such doctors could label as lesbian predators women who fought campaigns advocating greater domestic and sexual responsibility for men. Such a connection was made between the first wave feminist movement and lesbianism. European sexologists were the first to make this connection, encapsulated in Havelock Ellis' observation that female homosexuality was increasing because of feminism.⁸⁶ In a novel titled *The Perverts* American sexologist Dr. William Howard wrote explicitly about this connection in his account of a 'degenerate' feminist who was pursuing a university doctorate in 1901:

the female possessed of masculine ideas of independence; the viragint who would sit in the public highways and lift her pseudo-virile voice, proclaiming her sole right to decide questions of war or religion, or the value of celibacy and the curse of women's impurity, and that disgusting anti-social being, the

⁸³ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, pp. 22-36.

⁸⁴ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, pp. 22-36.

⁸⁵ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, p. 121.

⁸⁶ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 46.

female sexual pervert, are simply different degrees of the same class – degenerates.⁸⁷

Sexologists such as Kraft-Ebbing (German), Julien Chevalier (French), William Howard (American), Havelock Ellis and August Forel advocated that lesbianism was a pathology involving congenital inversion. Lesbians were born with “organic elements” of the male, and the effects of gaining educations, careers, becoming independent, being politically active and pursuing masculine sports signified that these women were “making men of themselves”.⁸⁸

Sigmund Freud also understood lesbianism as having little to do with a woman’s own specific desire for another women, but rather her desire to be a man. However, he pinpointed the development of this “less mature sexuality” in the experiences of childhood.⁸⁹ By the 1920s, sexology and Freudian language and concepts on human sexuality had entered the vernacular. Close friendships between women were carefully scrutinised within Europe from the turn of the twentieth century and within the US from the post war period.⁹⁰ Some lesbians accepted the supposed genetic basis of their ‘inverted’ gendered nature and used this to define themselves as homosexual and to organise publicly.⁹¹ The involvement of girls and women in vigorous masculine sports also cast a shadow over the normality of their gendered and sexual identity from the 1890s onwards.

⁸⁷ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 47. According to Faderman ‘viragint’ was probably taken from ‘the American translation of Kraft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, in which ‘viragincy’ is an advanced form of female inversion, measured according to masculinity’ (p. 47). Howard also wrote psychiatric articles making the link between feminists, lesbians and “unsightly and abnormal beings” – viragints (also cited in Faderman, p. 47).

⁸⁸ Julien Chevalier, in his 1893 work *Inversion sexuelle*, quoted in Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 46.

⁸⁹ Freud believed that through maturation normal women went from a clitoral sexual centre to a vaginal one. Lesbians were stuck at the clitoral stage.

⁹⁰ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, pp. 48-50.

⁹¹ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 59.

This brief history of the emergence and consequent widespread usage of the binary homosexual/heterosexual and its direct relationship with the historical shifts in power relations between men and women in Western society is instructive for a number of reasons. Firstly, it reveals the origin of one of our most enduring social myths about homosexuality - that of gender inversion. Second, it highlights the moral and medical discourses that certainly shaped societal prejudice against homosexuals for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Third, it demonstrates the strong link between gay and lesbian oppression and a gender order that subordinates women. Fourth, gay and lesbian people can be seen as having quite different worldviews and interests according to their socio- economic class. Most importantly, it highlights the historical patterns of struggle and resistance in gendered power relations especially when the nature, power and privileges of traditional (white, middle class) masculinity are threatened.

There were a number of responses to this perceived threat to masculinity including an antifeminist backlash, a pro-feminist position in which some men sought to reconstitute masculinity along feminist principles and a masculinist response that sought to re-virilize masculinity and stop its 'feminisation'.⁹² I want now to explore the connection between the origins and development of modern sport, which occurred exactly at this time in Western history, this masculinist response, and the dominant discourses of sexuality. Tom's closet has its origins here.

⁹² Michael Kimmel, 'Baseball and the Reconstitution of American Masculinity, 1880 – 1920', in Michael Messner and Don Sabo, (eds) *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1990), p. 58.

Modern Sport and the Boundary Marking of Gender and Sexuality

Modern sport, with its codified rules, formalised structures and emphasis on scoring, record making, scientific measurement and preparation, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Originating in the public schools of England during the 1850s and spreading to the US, Australia, Canada, other British colonies and eventually incorporated into the infant Olympic movement, the games movement was developed as an educational practice to “turn boys into men”.⁹³ Thomas Hughes romanticised account of life at the all-male Rugby School, captured in the influential book *Tom Browns Schooldays*, tells of six glorious years of rugby, cricket, cross-country running and impromptu fist fighting. These sports develop manly courage, stamina, resourcefulness, vigorous health, friendships and leadership qualities, all considered essential for an aspiring future leader of the nation and growing empire. Pierre de Coubertin was inspired by this educational role of sport for boys and became a vigorous advocate of the introduction of English games into the elite French schools as well as the shaping of the modern Olympic movement. Such games could reverse what he saw as the decline in the French upper class, who had grown lazy and “effete”.⁹⁴

The Muscular Christianity Movement of this time transformed gentle Jesus into a muscle-bound strongman, able to dominate the weakness within as well as without.

The feminisation of American boys was supposedly halted by the development of the

⁹³ J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public Schools* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁹⁴ E. Weber, ‘Pierre de Coubertin and the Introduction of Organised Sport into France’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 5. no. 2 (1970), pp. 3-26.

YMCA and the Boy Scouts where young men could be invigorated by the great outdoors away from the influences of mothers and female teachers.⁹⁵ President Theodore Roosevelt was a famous advocate of the “strenuous life”, which included rough sports, prize fighting and hunting as an antidote to the over-civilisation of men in sedentary city jobs and too much domesticity at home. Roosevelt’s speeches were full of references to the quest for manhood, national revitalisation and international domination.⁹⁶

The cult of muscularity was also widespread amongst middle-class men of this time, with bodybuilding and prize-fighting being immensely popular activities. Building manly bodies allowed men to emphasize their difference from women. Basing this difference in the body through vigorous sport and bodybuilding emphasised its naturalness at a time when women appeared to be stressing their similarity. Working class men also viewed sports as vital in making the man. Boys and men had to prove their manhood through visible achievement. Chauncey points out that this demonstration was particularly important because not far behind the fear of feminisation was the lurking fear of the effete, the fairy, the homosexual.⁹⁷ The visibility of gay subcultures in cities like New York, London, Paris and Amsterdam as well as the newly popularised discourse on sexuality shaped and supported these fears.

⁹⁵ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, pp. 113-114. Also see David M. Halberstam, *Revolutions and Their Followers* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

⁹⁶ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, pp. 113-114. Theodore Roosevelt, *American Ideals* (New York: Review of Reviews, 1910), contains his speech “The Strenuous Life”.

⁹⁷ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, p. 115.

Effeminacy, weakness, laziness, nervousness, sensitivity, lack of fortitude and moral fibre could readily flow into degeneracy. Real manliness was embedded in the strong phallic body- upstanding moral character as well as hardness and power. There was a medical foundation to these commonly held beliefs. Sport was considered an activity that regenerated the body and optimised sperm usage. Conversely, too much sex with women or masturbation could cause exhaustion in men. This could result in illness, weakness and that despised state of effeminacy. Without the vigour of sport, men could lose control of their sexuality. Inactivity and being too bookish could also be detrimental to men's health.

In summary, male athletic prowess became a lasting symbol of virtue and success. Not only were questions concerning a man's sexual morality and nature eliminated, but also the proof of athletic achievement was explicitly obvious, celebrated and recorded for all men to see. Manhood became a standardized, knowable attribute that was definitely superior to womanhood. Defeating another virtuous and competent opponent in fair sporting contest could enhance one's manliness further. A nation of vigorous men that achieved on the playing field in individual and especially team sports could prove a nation's worthiness.

Contrasting this perfect fit between sport and manliness was the strong de-limiting of women's involvement in sport and physical activity, particularly of the public, competitive and vigorous kinds. According to social Darwinist beliefs popular during the turn of the twentieth century in the West, women were 'by nature' the mothers and nurturers bound within the patriarchal family. They were emotional, co-operative

and passive and quite unsuited “to the rigours of competitive sport”.⁹⁸ Whilst man’s body and musculature was ideally suited to and invigorated by such activity, strenuous games were potentially dangerous for women’s reproductive organs and unsuited for their musculature.⁹⁹ The ‘True Woman’ was pious, pure, submissive and dedicated to domesticity.¹⁰⁰ Above all, she was expected to hide her sexual appetite, and stand firm as a strong fortress under siege by the naturally voracious and easily corruptible man. Outward expressions of female physicality were deemed indecorous, sensually suggestive and potentially dangerous, even close to prostitution.¹⁰¹

Feminists encouraged girls and women of the time, to pursue therapeutic exercise. Swedish gymnastics was designed to promote the health of these mothers-to-be and preserve the white race generally. Many from the middle classes took to the new bicycle, but in a decorous manner. Girls at private schools played team sports. The goal, however, was to instil fairness, team spirit and school and class loyalty. The goal of winning was played down, since competition was only fitting for men. This formed the context for women’s very slow inclusion into the Olympic movement and to the formation and societal acceptance of women’s sports organisations and competitions.

Women who were involved in vigorous masculine sports were considered deviant.

Whilst connections were made between women’s athleticism, mannishness and

⁹⁸ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 43-44.

⁹⁹ P. Atkinson, ‘Fitness, Feminism and Schooling’ in S. Delmont and L. Duffin (eds), *The Nineteenth Century Woman; Her Cultural and Physical World*, (London, 1978), pp. 92-133.

¹⁰⁰ B. Welter, ‘The Cult of True Womanhood’ in T. Frazier (ed.) *The Underside of American History*, vol. 1. (New York, 1971), pp. 205-229.

¹⁰¹ Lois Young, *Feminism and the Physical*, Unpublished masters thesis, Department of Education, Monash University, Victoria, Australia, 1986, chapter 6. Also see Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 91-93 and Caroline Symons, ‘The Shaping of the Gendered and Sporting Australian’s Body. Women’s Emergence in Sport. 1910-1930’. Unpublished Honours thesis (School of History, University of Melbourne, 1989), pp. 13-20.

lesbianism, these were not popular understandings until after the First World War. According to Jeffrey Weeks, female homosexuals were not as organised, visible or articulate as their male counterparts of this time and they took another generation to become a recognisable community and political force.¹⁰² Greater visibility through such collective formation as well as public ridicule of lesbians affirmed this link.¹⁰³

In fact, nationalism and these medical and moral discourses of gender, sexuality and sport were strongly linked and celebrated in the early years of the development of international sports competition. During a time of imperial competition, expansionism and concern for the health of the white race, it was believed that the national body had to be fit and maintain order both within and without. Sport and physical culture that was gendered appropriately supposedly made men not only strong to defend, expand and glorify the nation, but virile to reproduce it. It made women healthy mothers of the nation. Such discourses defined the sickness and health of the individual and the national body.¹⁰⁴ In this context, it was a short step to regard homosexuality as a serious national disease. Robust masculinity and nationhood was affirmed through male athletic power and success on the international sports field.

Modern sport, from its inception and throughout its subsequent development was largely a male preserve in which manliness was achieved as an antithesis of womanliness and male homosexuality. As one of the most central cultural sites in

¹⁰² Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality* (London, Routledge: 1991), p. 79.

¹⁰³ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, p. 130.

¹⁰⁴ Vertinsky, *Making and Marking Gender*, pp. 2-4.

which manhood was made and celebrated, it can be understood how modern sport has become so prevalent and popular in the twentieth century.¹⁰⁵

Gender, Sexuality and Sport during the 1940s - 1950s

During the 1950s, when Tom Waddell was growing up in the US, homophobia was particularly pronounced. This decade of reaction, of Cold War politics, of patriarchal authority socially engineered with the sanctioning of experts and enforcement through law and fear, was supposed to set the country 'straight' after the social upheaval caused by war.¹⁰⁶

During World War Two conventional gender relations had been transformed. Many women gained a taste of independence and social recognition through filling occupations left vacant by men, earning independent wages and socialising more freely. The social forces brought on by the war also brought gay and lesbian people together. Historian Allan Berube documents the formation of the gay male community within the naval port of San Francisco during the war years.¹⁰⁷ Gay men and lesbians purged from the armed forces because of their sexuality, stayed on in cities like San Francisco and New York. Berube also documents the rapid growth in gay and lesbian

¹⁰⁵ Crossett makes the important observation that only through the analysis of gender and sexuality and their connection with the development of sport can we understand the reasons for why sport blossomed in a society that was becoming increasingly rationalised: "In a society concerned with sexuality and manliness, sport was a purposeful and rational activity". The signs of salvation and moral goodness in an earlier period that was demonstrated by good works and the meticulous accumulation of wealth (protestant work ethic) was superseded by the measurable sign of athletic prowess as demonstrating moral, clean, rational, successful and superior living for young men of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. See T. Crossett, 'Masculinity, Sexuality, and the Development of Early Modern Sport', pp. 45-54.

¹⁰⁶ See Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, chapter six for a comprehensive account of 'McCarthyism and its legacy' on lesbians and gay men in the US.

¹⁰⁷ Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Lesbian and Gay Men in World War Two* (New York: Free Press, 1990), pp. 249-271.

bars and clubs during this post-war period. These nascent gay and lesbian communities were “ripe for political organising”.¹⁰⁸

Gendered and sexual relations were decisively returned to their traditional place shortly after the war. Medical experts claimed that women could only be healthy and fulfilled by having babies and taking care of family life. Women were urged back into the home. Sexual non-conformity was also seen as particularly dangerous. Alfred Kinsey was suspected of subversion because his research revealed so many same-sex attracted Americans.¹⁰⁹

The McCarthy witch-hunts of this era exposed and vilified homosexuals as well as communists. The purging of gay men and lesbians from the armed forces escalated and they were also dismissed from government jobs. This government policy of harassment was based on the medical theory of the “lack of emotional stability which is found in most sex perverts and the weakness of their moral fibre’ which supposedly made them a security risk.”¹¹⁰ Homosexuals in all areas of society were hunted down. The police regularly raided gay bars and meeting places. Students entering state subsidised colleges and universities were required to take a battery of tests in part designed to reveal sexual orientation.¹¹¹ The popular press presented homosexuality as the chief illness blighting America.¹¹² If a homosexual decided (or was forced) to

¹⁰⁸ Vaid, *Virtual Equality*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁹ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 140.

¹¹⁰ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 142. This was quoted from US Senate records that justified the government policy of harassing homosexuals.

¹¹¹ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 145.

¹¹² Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, pp. 145 - 146.

‘cure’ his or her ‘illness’ they could look forward to aversion therapy.¹¹³ The effects of these witch-hunts, the fear and silences it generated, were felt throughout the 1960s as Waddell’s sexuality and sense of himself as a man were developing.

According to Susan Cahn, lesbians suffered public ridicule for transgressing the codes of sexuality and gender.¹¹⁴ They stood as symbols of refusal and non-conformity to the greatly emphasised social norms of heterosexual femininity and domesticity during this period. The lesbian stigma was ever present in women’s sports, and dedicated, strong and exceptional sportswomen were ready candidates for accusations of gender inversion and homosexuality. Cahn points out that “many women adopted an apologetic stance toward their athletic skill. Even as they competed to win, they made sure to display outward signs of femininity in dress, demeanour” and heterosexual relations.¹¹⁵ By covering the feminine hobbies, boyfriends and marriage plans of female athletes, the media in effect contributed to the process of entrenching heterosexism into the “institutional and ideological framework of sport”.¹¹⁶ Many leaders and officials of women’s sports also promoted this process. Widespread homophobia within women’s sports as well as the galvanising of lesbian sub-cultures

¹¹³ Leader of the Australian Greens Party, Senator Bob Brown, discusses his electric shock aversion therapy during the 1950s in Erin Shale’s *Inside Out: An Australian Collection of Coming Out Stories* (Melbourne: Bookman Press, 1999), pp. 102-103. The Australian climate was also a chilly one for homosexuals during the 1950s and 60s, with witch-hunts for homosexuals in the armed forces and the public service and surveillance by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. Homosexuality was viewed as a character defect – giving ‘them a propensity for treacherous behaviour’ and hence were deemed a significant national security risk. See Graham Willet, *Living Out Loud: A History of Gay and Lesbian Activism in Australia* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2000), pp. 10-13.

¹¹⁴ Susan Cahn, ‘From The “Muscle Moll” To The “Butch” Ballplayer: Mannishness, Lesbianism, And Homophobia In US Women’s Sport’, *Feminist Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2. (Summer 1993), pp. 350-354.

¹¹⁵ Cahn, ‘From The “Muscle Moll” To The “Butch” Ballplayer’, p. 354.

¹¹⁶ Cahn, ‘From The “Muscle Moll” To The “Butch” Ballplayer’, p. 354.

and support networks in particular sports such as softball were outcomes of this history.

Butch/Femme Styles of the 1940s and 1950s

During the 1940s and 1950s butch/femme styles and sex roles were integral to the identity and culture of many urban lesbians within the US and a number of other Western nations. The butch style was characterised by a 'tough' and assertive posture: masculine dress and short hair. There was a ready fit between this style for athletic lesbians and a positive lesbian identity within this community could be forged through sporting achievement. Sport did provide an important haven for women who didn't fit into the post World War Two heterosexual ideal. This was especially so for many lesbians who found affirmation, friendships, an important avenue into lesbian culture and community and a place to find companionship, loving and sexual relationships on sports teams. This was achieved in an environment where lesbian team members kept their sexual orientation concealed from the public.¹¹⁷ During the dangerous times of the 1940s - 60s lesbian athletes supported each other in these closeted circles and developed a code of silence that enabled survival. Sports such as softball allowed women who preferred 'butch' styles of dress and comportment a place and physical activity to express themselves and be supported and affirmed. Cahn summarises the ways that sport provided this important alternative gendered space for lesbians as well as heterosexual women who described themselves as tomboys:

Consequently, sport could relocate girls or women with lesbian identities or feelings in an alternative nexus of gender meanings, allowing them to "be themselves" – or to express their gender and sexuality in an unconventional way. This applied to heterosexual women as well...As an activity that

¹¹⁷ Cahn, 'From The "Muscle Moll" To The "Butch" Ball Player', pp. 356-363.

incorporated prescribed “masculine” physical activity into a way of being in the female body, athletics provided a social space and practice for reorganising conventional meanings of embodied masculinity and femininity.¹¹⁸

Hargreaves describes similar conditions for lesbian sportswomen in Britain during this period.¹¹⁹ Helen Lenskyj documents similar historical patterns in her book on the history of women, sport and sexuality in Canada.¹²⁰ A history of women’s sport in Australia that explores the politics of normative sexuality and the experiences of lesbian sportswomen is yet to be written.¹²¹

Gender, Sexuality and Sport in the Present Day

A number of significant social movements within the Western world affected social change from the 1970s onwards. The second wave feminist movement questioned traditional gender roles and strove for greater economic, social and sexual freedoms for women and greater equality between the sexes.¹²² Practically all occupations were opened to women, including those deemed the sole and defining preserve of men (for example, political leadership, armed forces, police, emergency services, dangerous labour intensive work). Women for the first time in history could successfully control their fertility through the use of accessible contraception. In principle at least, the separation between sexuality and reproduction was now complete.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Cahn, ‘From The “Muscle Moll” To The Butch Ball Player’, p. 361.

¹¹⁹ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 135-136.

¹²⁰ Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality* (Toronto, Ontario: women’s Press, 1986).

¹²¹ Personal conversations with lesbian sportswomen who played cricket and competed in competitive swimming and athletics during the 1950s-1960s within Australia indicate similar patterns.

¹²² Change is slow and actual equality in these areas has not been achieved. Men still dominate parliaments, business boardrooms and senior management positions in practically all Western countries.

¹²³ Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping Our Lives* (London: Profile Books, 1999), pp. 54-62.

Equal opportunity enacted in law throughout the west ensured that women had equal access to education, employment and the provision of services within society. Issues of sexual violence, exploitation and abuses of power exercised by men over women within relations of family and intimacy have also been openly questioned. Economic transformation within capitalism such as the demise of heavy industries which traditionally employed men in blue collar occupations, and the expansion of the service and information sectors, which favour the educated, including many women, have also underlined the changes in the relations of sexes and the traditional family over the past thirty years.¹²⁴ Attitudes towards sexuality were also significantly liberalized, and sex was cultivated and used within the west as a primary symbol and site of desirability, success and conspicuous consumption. The heterosexy female body was the main vehicle for this marketing and consumption.

Women were not the only significant group in society to gain greater equality. The black rights movement in the US placed race politics and equality firmly on the national agenda, whilst postcolonial liberation fought for by indigenous and racially oppressed populations exposed and transformed racial power relations in many corners of the globe.¹²⁵ The gay and lesbian rights movement was also emerging during the 1970s as well as proud and visible gay and lesbian subcultures within the US, Western and northern Europe, England and Australia.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Tom Morton, *Altered Mates. The Man Question* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1997), pp. 52-59.

¹²⁵ See Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p.75. and S. Cornell and D. Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, 1994), p.111.

¹²⁶ See the introduction of B. Adams, J. Duyvendak and A. Krouwel (eds), *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics. National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

Gay liberation proudly celebrated gay and lesbian sexuality and called on gay and lesbian peoples to ‘come out’ and be visible and to join in a developing and extensive gay and lesbian cultural and political community.¹²⁷ New York City was the place in which the start of gay liberation was supposedly ignited by a riot between police and patrons of a gay bar at the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street on the night of June 28, 1969. Instead of putting up with police harassment the patrons – “drag queens and kings, many African American and Latino, hustlers, students, gay and lesbians” fought back.¹²⁸ More people joined those fighting back and a mass protest ensued for three days. This event has taken on mythic significance world wide as the birth of gay liberation. It also had immediate national impact with three hundred Gay Liberation Fronts being created by the end of 1970. Writing about the history of gay and lesbian movements within the US, Urvashi Vaid outlines four new ideas that the Gay Liberation movement introduced into homophile politics and understanding. These were:

(1) the notion that coming out and pursuing gay and lesbian visibility held the key to our freedom; (2) that queer freedom would profoundly change gender roles, sexism and heterosexual institutions like the family; (3) that gay, lesbian and bisexual people were an integral part of the broad demand for social change and needed a political philosophy that made connections to race, gender and economic issues; and (4) that the creation of a gay and lesbian counterculture was an essential part of establishing lesbian and gay identity.¹²⁹

Coming out and identifying publicly, communally and politically as gay and lesbian remains the central tenet and practice of this movement. Creating public gay and lesbian subcultures and political movements striving for civil rights acted to increase queer visibility within mainstream as well as in gay and lesbian media, politics and

¹²⁷ Vaid, *Virtual Equality*, pp. 54-61.

¹²⁸ ‘Stonewall 25, Official Commemorative Guide, June 28 1969 – June 26 1994’, *The List Magazine*, vol. 1 issue. 12 (June 1994), p. 15.

¹²⁹ Vaid, *Virtual Equality*, p. 57.

society. This subculture has developed to the point where marketers and social commentators now talk of a gay and lesbian niche market(s) of consumers.¹³⁰ Leisure pursuits, organisations and businesses are a significant part of this niche market based on sexuality.

The Gay Liberation movement of the late 1960s and 1970s tended to be dominated by gay men, and most lesbian activism occurred within the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) of this period. Lesbians tackled patriarchal oppression alongside their straight sisters, and by the early 1970s lesbian feminism had emerged as one of the most radical sectors of the WLM.¹³¹ The creation of women centred and women only communities, spaces, lifestyles and politics was a common practice amongst political lesbians of the 1970s and 1980s, and appears to have permeated the lives of lesbian community life in general within many Western cities.¹³²

The gaining of recognition and the striving for equality was (and is) not a seamless, linear process. Movements of resistance to change, regional differences of country and city, the rise in fundamentalist religions, even the manipulative propaganda uses of a debilitating and deadly disease such as HIV/AIDS - have made the dance to equality in gender, race and sexuality an oscillating, uneven, often complex, emotional, violent, difficult, challenging, enriching, exhausting and never quite

¹³⁰ Dan Baker, 'A History in Ads: The Growth of the Gay and Lesbian Market' in Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed (eds) *Homo Economics. Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 11-20.

¹³¹ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, chapter 9.

¹³² Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, chapter 9. The theme of separatist politics during this period came up frequently during interviewing and conversing with lesbian women from Australia, England, the US, Canada, the Netherlands and Germany.

complete performance.¹³³ In fact, social historian Elaine Showalter sees parallels between the 1890s and the 1990s. Both are decades in which the boundaries of gender and sexuality are contested and unstable.¹³⁴ The institutions and social practices of modern mainstream sport have been permeated by these social, economic and political contexts and have also contributed to change, mostly in the form of conservation and resistance.

Masculinities and Modern Sport

Sport is still largely considered the preserve of men - or heterosexual men to be precise. It is not just that men participate more in sport, but do so largely in sports that exemplify traditionally masculine traits such as speed, power and aggression. These traits are showcased in the most celebrated men's team sports within Western nations such as the football codes, cricket, baseball, ice hockey, and European handball. These sports continue to play a central role in the shaping and reinforcing of what has been termed hegemonic masculinity in these societies.¹³⁵

International competition involving the national male teams in these sports, is a prime means by which national prowess is demonstrated and celebrated. Through saturation media coverage and lucrative advertising and sponsorship, these sports have become multi-million dollars business ventures. Considerable time, money, resources and

¹³³ The 'Million Man March' that occurred in the US in 1997 mobilised African American men in particular to reassert a more unified sense of a traditional and purposeful masculinity. 'The Promise Keepers', led by an ex-football coach, have also mobilised in the US. Some of their main beliefs emphasise the re-claiming of manhood, the re-establishment of male leadership within the family and the nation and a concomitant emphasis on the subservience of women and the condemnation of homosexuality. There are signs of similar masculinity movements within Europe. See P. Vertinsky, *Making and Marking Gender*, p. 4. These developments are indicative of resistances to feminism, changing gender patterns and the increased visibility of gays and lesbians.

¹³⁴ Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture in the Fin de Siecle*, p. 3.

¹³⁵ Robert. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1995), pp. 76-77.

cultural capital are poured into these traditionally masculine sports, and it is not an exaggeration to say that these sports attract a strong tribal and quasi-religious following.

Maguire makes some important observations concerning the globalisation of -modern or what he terms male achievement sports.¹³⁶ During the early twentieth century there is a growth in competition between national teams, the acceptance of international rules and the establishment of global competitions such as the Olympics and world championships. This period corresponds with an intensification in nationalism and the invention of national tradition, and male achievement sport became part of this invention as a status symbol of nationhood. Through these international competitions, predominantly between Western nations, and imperialist expansionism into non-Western countries, the spread of these male achievement sports occurred on a global scale.¹³⁷ International sports organisations and value systems were dominated by the west up until the 1960s. After this time the Soviet Union and its allies, and countries that were going through decolonialisation, gradually asserted their influence.

There are a number of organisational and value system differences within this international sport scene. These include: the gentlemanly amateur ideal of sport propounded especially by the English; a predominant US version of sport which was managed as a professional and scientific enterprise; the state administered and scientised achievement sport of the Soviet and East German variety; and the assertion of independence by postcolonial nations and indigenous peoples through their own

¹³⁶ J. Maguire, *Global Sport. Identities, Societies, Civilisations* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1999).

¹³⁷ Maguire, *Global Sport*, chapter 4.

folk games. The amateur ideal essentially died by the late 1980s, and the US version with its commercial management, marketing and mass media coverage of sport is the predominant paradigm of international sport to the present day.¹³⁸

The media-sport complex that dominates this international scene tends to market sameness in its sports spectacles. This spectacle is heavily and conservatively gendered, sports stars are celebrities continually under media scrutiny and the main fare are patriot games involving national male sport teams charismatically displaying and contesting the nation's worth. Furthermore, through this globalisation of achievement sport a "body habitus" has come to influence and shape people on an international scale. Continual striving for the super-human athlete through scientific and technological management is a major shaper of this habitus.¹³⁹ The interception of the sportive body with the embodiment of gender and sexuality is another.

International sportswomen have to market themselves as heterosexually attractive to achieve commercial success. Media recognition is also enhanced by this marketing practice.

Sport is still considered one of the central shaping mechanisms of masculinity in present day Western society.¹⁴⁰ Compared to the period in which modern sport was

¹³⁸ Maguire, *Global Sport*, pp. 89-94.

¹³⁹ Maguire, *Global Sport*, pp. 89-94 and, chapter 7.

¹⁴⁰ See Lois Bryson, 'Sport and the Maintenance of Masculine Hegemony', *Women's Studies International Forum* vol. 10 (1987), pp. 349 - 360; R. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); E. Dunning, 'Sport as a Male Preserve', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.3. no.1 (1986), pp. 79-90; J. Duppert, *A Man's Place: Masculinity in Transition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979); Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*; Messner and Sabo, (eds), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*; M. Nelson, *The Stronger Women Get, The More Men Love Football: Sexism in the American Culture of Sports* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co, 1994); Brian Pronger, *The Arena of Masculinity: Sports, Homosexuality and the Meaning of Sex* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

becoming established internationally there are now even fewer opportunities to display and be rewarded for physical prowess in traditional masculine areas such as physical toil and combat. Sport can be seen as one of the last bastions of masculinity where men can differentiate themselves from women. In fact, sport has become the main public arena of bodily display, in which traditional boundaries of gender and sexuality are conserved, reinforced, and contested. Because the body is usually seen as natural - relatively un-socialised and therefore unchanging - the traditional gendered displays of the body in sport confirm such differences in nature and demonstrate the physical superiority of men.

Sport as a masculinising practice is certainly emphasised in the life of young males. It is the central experience of many boys' schooling and a great deal of time, effort and institutional support is given to this process.¹⁴¹ Sport is the main arena in which boys achieve status and the much sought after approval of their peers. Connell makes the important observation that to learn to be a male involves learning to project a physical presence that speaks of latent power. Through sport boys learn how to be valued and recognised (or become outsiders), how to occupy space, to bond with other males and to have a physical presence in the world. For adult men this can be translated into embodied social power. To quote Connell:

Force and competence are...translations into the language of the body of the social relations which define men as holders of power, women as subordinate. They become statements embedded in the body, not just in mental body-image, but in the very feel and texture of the body, its attitudes, its muscular tension, its surfaces. This is important as it is one of the main ways in which the superiority of men becomes 'naturalised' i.e, seen as part of the order of nature...And it is especially important in allowing this belief and the attendant

¹⁴¹ B. Connell, *Gender and Power*.

practices to be sustained by men who in other social relations are personally powerless, who cannot sustain any claim to potency.¹⁴²

Sport, especially the competitive and combative variety, is thought to be an excellent training ground for this masculine embodiment. In contrast, feminising practices generally constrict the expression of confident and forceful physicality in girls and women.¹⁴³ From the earliest age, girls tend to be handled more gently than boys, they are allowed less physical freedom and adventurous play, and their toys and games are carried out within a more domestic and quieter sphere.¹⁴⁴ Masculinising and feminising practices like these contribute to maintaining what theorists term the gender order. They also demonstrate the hard work that goes into the gendering process - a social process not a natural given.

Connell best describes this order as “an historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity”.¹⁴⁵ Dominating this order is a ‘hegemonic masculinity’ - in Western countries usually white, middle classed, able bodied and heterosexual. Traditional gender expectations are marked out in this order so as to support and reinforce the political, economic and symbolic dominance of hegemonic men.¹⁴⁶ In part created and re-enacted through the

¹⁴² Connell, R.W. *Which Way is Up? Essays on Class, Sex and Culture*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwen, 1983), p.18.

¹⁴³ Iris Marion Young, *Throwing Like A Girl and Other Essays in Philosophical and Social Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

¹⁴⁴ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 147- 148.

¹⁴⁵ Connell, *Gender and Power*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁴⁶ Connell, *Gender and Power*, pp. 98-99; J. Epstein and K. Straub, *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 1-28. Connell points out that men occupy the main positions of political power throughout the world - as leaders of nations and states, as the majority of politicians, as influential businessmen, as leaders of the armed forces, security, police and the prestigious professions. Men also control the majority of the world’s wealth and are the prime accumulators and wielders of economic capital. They are also the main overseers of the large multi-billion dollar culture industries such as the mass media and telecommunication. Discussed in R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), pp. 73-75.

most celebrated sports it operates in ways that constrain and render inferior sportswomen and certain men, including non-heterosexuals and non-athletes. This explains why women are engaged in an ongoing battle to gain even a measure of parity in opportunity, funding, sponsorship, social and financial recognition and reward for their athletic endeavours. It also explains why women hold few positions of power within the sports world.¹⁴⁷

The success of sports since the 1970s in financial, political and symbolic terms is largely driven by the media. Media coverage of women's sport is poor all over the world and sportswomen are often sexualised and trivialised when they do receive coverage.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, men and women who question these traditional gender expectations in society generally and in sport in particular are often thought of as dangerous and in need of control. This is where homophobia and heterosexism can enter the picture.

¹⁴⁷ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 174-207, 209-224; Marion Stell, *Half the Race: A History of Australian Women in Sport* (North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1991), pp. 251 - 271.

¹⁴⁸ Research reported by the Sports Council of Britain estimates that sportsmen received over 90% of total sports space in British national newspapers. A 1997 study into newspaper coverage of sport in Australia found that up to 10% of newspaper space was devoted to women's sport. Women fare about the same in the US and New Zealand. Television coverage is even more biased in favouring sportsmen. According to Hargreaves, sports such as men's boxing, cricket, football, horse-racing, motor-racing, snooker and 'imported' men's sports such as American wrestling, American football, baseball, rally cross and sumo wrestling fill nearly all of British televised sport viewing hours. Australian sports women fair no better, receiving two percent of all television coverage, which ranks them below that of dogs and horses. The only time that women receive near comparable reportage in these countries is during an Olympics when nationalism is at its height. For statistics on women in sport media see Brian Stoddart, *Invisible Games: A Report on the Media Coverage of Women's Sport* (Canberra: Sport and Recreation Ministers Council, 1992); Murray Phillips, *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Sports Commission, 1996) and Caroline Symons and Matthew Nicholson, 'Women in Sport Media: New Directions', *Bulletin of Sport and Culture*. no. 19. (November 1999), Victoria University Sport and Culture Group, Melbourne, pp. 6 - 9. For a British and broader world perspective see Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*.

Homophobia in Contemporary Society

The dominant view that heterosexuality is and should be the norm continues to be the organising principle of the gendering process. Women who are independent from men sexually, economically and socially are considered a threat to the gender order. Men who love, desire and have sex with other men, and/or act 'effeminate' in some way, can also undermine hegemonic masculinity.¹⁴⁹ The term homophobia has been coined to cover the prejudicial beliefs and practices resulting from and bolstering heterosexism. Sears and Williams, in their path-breaking book entitled *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia. Strategies That Work*, succinctly define homophobia as:

prejudice, discrimination, harassment and acts of violence directed against sexual minorities, including lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered persons, evidenced in a deep-seated fear or hatred of those who love and sexuality desire those of the same-sex.¹⁵⁰

Homophobic beliefs are strong amongst young heterosexual males demonstrating their gender identity, when "to behave like a man means not to behave like women".¹⁵¹ Hence, Tom's concern as a youth about his attraction to men and dancing. Some young men are so homophobic that they resort to physical violence and even murder to prove and revenge their masculinity.¹⁵² Heterosexism is also maintained by

¹⁴⁹ Messner and Sabo, *Sex Violence and Power in Sport*, pp. 106-109.

¹⁵⁰ James Sears and Walter Williams (eds) *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia. Strategies That Work*, p. 16. Homophobia was first used during the early 1970s. See the glossary (Appendix 6) for an account of its development.

¹⁵¹ Messner and Sabo, *Sex Violence and Power in Sport*, p. 103.

¹⁵² See G. Mason and S. Tomsen (eds), *Homophobic Violence* (Leichardt, NSW: The Hawkins Press, Australian Institute of Criminology, 1997). Since 1980 up to 74 murders in New South Wales could be described as gay killings. The victim in these killings was killed primarily because of their perceived sexual orientation (p.vii). Carole Ruthchild describes gay - bashing "as a contemporary urban pastime for some young Australian males": Mason and Tomsen. (eds), *Homophobic Violence*, p.1.

harassment, force and violence.¹⁵³ Vilification, harassment and gay/lesbian bashing are real concerns for many gay men and lesbians in most parts of the world. Recent research into the lives of same-sex attracted Australian youth aged 14 – 22, indicates that this bullying and victimisation starts young, even in this comparatively tolerant society.¹⁵⁴ Research into the experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth in US schools reveals a similar picture. Rienzo, Button and Wald found that such youth are at risk for a variety of health problems including - higher rates of substance abuse, victimisation of verbal and physical harassment, isolation, as well as alienation leading to higher rates of low self esteem, dropping out of school, depression and attempting and committing suicide.¹⁵⁵

Homophobic discrimination is a worldwide human rights issue. As Hargreaves so succinctly states: “In all counties in the world lesbians and gay men face

¹⁵³ In 1994 gay men and lesbians from Melbourne were surveyed concerning their experiences of violence, abuse and discrimination based on the grounds of sexuality. A summary of some of the main findings appears below:

Kind of Abuse/Violence	Women	Men
Verbal abuse in public place	70%	64%
Threatened with violence	36%	39%
Bashed or physically abused	11%	20%
Experiencing all of the above	70%	69%

Source: G. Mason. ‘Heterosexed Violence: Typicality and Ambiguity’ in Mason and Tomsen (eds), *Homophobic Violence*, p. 16. A study by the New South Wales Police Force, entitled ‘*Out of the Blue*’ revealed that lesbians are six times more likely to experience physical violence over a yearly period in Sydney than straight women, and gay men are four times more likely to experience the same. See S. Thompson, *Improving Police Gay/Lesbian Relations and Targeting Hate Crimes against Gays and Lesbians, 1985 to 1992* (Darlinghurst, NSW: NSW Police, 1997), p. 2. This report was launched in the NSW Parliament in 1995 and a major and innovative anti-homophobic violence project has since been funded by the state in NSW. The brutal murder of Mathew Shepard in small town US in 1999 caused the US President to speak out on the hate crimes against gays and lesbians in his country. See G. Herek. and K. Berrill, (eds), *Hate Crimes: Confronting Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1992), for an American perspective.

¹⁵⁴ L. Hillier, L. Harrison and D. Dempsey, ‘Stories of Life on the Wild Side: Same Sex Attracted Young People Document their Lives’ in *Journal of the Health Education Association Victoria*, (Melbourne: Summer 1999), pp.12-15.

¹⁵⁵ B. Rienzo., J. Button., and K. Wald., ‘School - based programs addressing gay/lesbian/bisexual youth issues’, in *Journal of the International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance* (Winter 1997), pp. 20-25.

discrimination; in most countries they experience physical violence; and in some countries their lives are threatened by government policy and ideology”.¹⁵⁶

Discrimination based on the grounds of sexual orientation is not explicitly prohibited or even mentioned in any international treaty or standard adopted by the United Nations. In most Middle Eastern and African and some Asian countries punitive criminal sentences ranging from prison sentences to execution can be imposed on those caught engaging in homosexual relations. According to Amnesty International’s groundbreaking report on the human rights abuses of GLBTQI people throughout the world human rights violations including discrimination, harassment, torture, ill treatment, unjust imprisonment and capital punishment are common experiences:

This repression is often openly and passionately defended in the name of culture, religion, morality or public health, and facilitated by specific legal provisions... Some governments seek not only to exclude lesbian and gay people from local culture, but also to deny that they are members of the human race.¹⁵⁷

Over the past decade there have been some positive developments for lesbians and gay men in many Western countries. Anti-discrimination laws that protect lesbians and gays in the areas of employment, human services and education have been enacted in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the European Union and parts of the US.¹⁵⁸ Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden allow the long-term same-sex partners of citizens to apply for residency on partnering grounds. Since the 1970s in the Netherlands and the 1990s in Australia and New

¹⁵⁶ Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 129.

¹⁵⁷ Amnesty International, *Crimes of Hate, Conspiracy of Silence. Torture and Ill-treatment Based on Sexual Identity* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2001), p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ See the respective chapters on these countries and regions in B. Adams, J. Duyvendak and A. Krouwel, *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics*.

Zealand, lesbians and gay men have been allowed into the military services. Marriage of same-sex couples is recognised in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, with appropriate laws being passed in the late 1990s.

The acceptance of and improvement to lesbian and gay rights appears to be more controversial in Anglo-Saxon based countries and in nations with strong Catholic or fundamentalist protestant religious influence. Furthermore, even in countries with legal sanctions against discrimination, there are few civic and political leaders, social institutions or educational programs that actively work to further the acceptance of lesbian and gay citizens. Moral authorities such as church and political leaders as well as the media can send out confusing and often negative messages concerning homosexuality. In this inconsistent and often reactive context the positive developments marking the greater tolerance toward lesbians and gay men are relatively fragile and in a state of flux. Compared to the 1950s and 1960s of Tom's youth - in which homosexuality dared not speak its name - this tolerance is a significant improvement.

Homophobia and the Contemporary Sports World

The politics of homophobia is particularly pronounced in mainstream sport where it highlights and reinforces sexual difference and inequality, and especially hegemonic masculinity in a number of ways. Most of the literature documenting these politics and the experiences of gay and lesbian sportspeople is from the United States. There are some discernable patterns that are similar in practically all Western countries. For instance, the popular conception of the 'most masculine' man is the team sport hero, strong, courageous, relatively wealthy and able to attract and have sex with many

desirable young women.¹⁵⁹ Contrasting this is the popular stereotype of the effeminate, soft and swishy gay man. The gay male athlete contradicts these cultural myths and must be rendered invisible to maintain them. Women are kept out of sport or marginalised to produce the same effect, and the fear of the 'lesbian label' is one of the favourite strategies used to achieve this.

In general, homophobia creates a hostile environment for lesbian and gay sportspersons, especially at the elite and professional levels where the glare of the media and the opportunities for glory and financial rewards are greatest. There is the daily threat of stigma, ostracism and discrimination.¹⁶⁰ This hostile atmosphere can affect these athletes' performances, their general enjoyment of their sport, their career prospects and financial returns. They may even be forced to drop out of their sport. Most remain deeply closeted.¹⁶¹

For instance, even up to the year 2003 there were no professional or international level male athletes playing high profile team sports that were publicly 'out' as gay. By making their sexuality public, top athletes such as Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King, and David Kopay have lost lucrative endorsements and have suffered stigmatisation.¹⁶² There have been no Australian Rules football players or cricketers to publicly reveal their homosexuality. The only known gay male professional team sportsman to 'come out' during his career was Australian Rugby League front-rower

¹⁵⁹ Messner and Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sport*, pp. 36-42.

¹⁶⁰ Helen Lenskyj, "Combating Homophobia in Sport and Physical Education", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, vol. 8 (1991), pp. 61-69.

¹⁶¹ Pat Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets. Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1998), p. 48. Entertainment Sport Promotions Network (ESPN), *Life of the Gay Athlete*. A television documentary broadcast in the US in 1999 – used mostly American based material, but also had an international perspective.

¹⁶² D. Kopay and P. Young, *The David Kopay Story: An Extraordinary Self-revelation* (New York: Arbor House, 1977) and M. Navratilova and G. Vecsey, *Martina* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

Ian Roberts. He found the closet far too destructive, and publicly announced his homosexuality in 1995. This was during the last three years of his illustrious twelve-year sports career.¹⁶³

Roberts appears to have carefully managed this emergence and reported few financial losses. His biography documents the widespread homophobia and misogyny of the rugby culture as well as the ongoing homophobic verbal and physical abuse that he received.¹⁶⁴ This abuse mainly came from opposing supporters and young males out to prove themselves on the streets. Roberts recalls the conditional and sometimes respectful tolerance he received from some of the key players of his team. He has also received positive acclaim for his courage in being one of the only world-class male athletes to stand tall as a gay man.¹⁶⁵ The first professional soccer player from the Netherlands to ‘come out’ – albeit on retirement – had this to say about the homophobic and misogynist world of this most celebrated and richest of men’s sports:

The soccer world is a heterosexual world. Macho behaviour and women predominate. Whenever soccer players are together they get vulgar, they talk about women and having sex. As a young boy I felt uncertain in that context. That’s why I didn’t want my fellow players to know it. Eight hours a day I passed. I couldn’t do anything else.¹⁶⁶

This is telling considering that the Netherlands is considered one of the most tolerant countries in the world for gay and lesbian peoples.

¹⁶³ See Paul Freeman, *Ian Roberts: Finding Out* (Sydney: Random House, 1997)

¹⁶⁴ Freeman, *Ian Roberts*, pp. 197-200 and pp. 294-299.

¹⁶⁵ Freeman, *Ian Roberts*.

¹⁶⁶ *Algemeen Dagblad*, 25 February 1997, quoted in Agnes Ellings, ‘Integration Through ‘Regular’ and ‘Queer’ Sports: A Critical Reflection Can the Gay Games ‘Change the World’? Unpublished paper presented at the conference ‘Queer Games? Theories, politics, sports’, Amsterdam (29-31 July 1998), p. 6.

At the US college level, sports administrators and athletes feel antigay pressure from a number of sources including alumni, trustees and University administrators. This pressure can be particularly effective during times of reduced funding.¹⁶⁷ In a study investigating the attitudes of heterosexual US college athletes (male and female) and non athletes held toward gay men, lesbians and homosexuality generally, researchers found male athletes to be the most homophobic of these groupings, and their homophobia was particularly pronounced towards gay men.¹⁶⁸ Based on their findings and other work done in this area, the researchers gave this advice to college athletic department administrators and counsellors:

Combating homophobia in intercollegiate athletics is a daunting and threatening undertaking. In many cases, the hint that someone in intercollegiate athletics is a lesbian or gay man is enough to be dropped from a team, not have a contract renewed, or be fired outright...Most athletic departments are probably not ready for a "Combating Homophobia in Sport" workshop. Combating homophobia is more likely to occur at the individual and personal level as athletic counsellors work with athletes.¹⁶⁹

There have been a few more top-level male athletes in individual sports that have 'come out' publicly during the 1990s. For instance, diver Greg Louganis, figure skater Rudi Galindo, and swimmers Bruce Hayes and Mark Tewkesbury revealed that they were gay during the 1990s. The Gay Games proved to be the forum for this revelation for three of these international and Olympic champions.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Dan, *Jocks: True Stories of America's Gay Male Athletes* (LA: Alyson books, 1998), pp. xiii - xiv.

¹⁶⁸ M. Andersen, B. Butki and S. Heyman, 'Homophobia and Sport Experience', *Academic Athletic Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 43-45.

¹⁶⁹ M. Andersen et al 'Homophobia and Sport Experience', pp. 44-45.

¹⁷⁰ Bruce Hayes and Greg Louganis 'came out' to the public and the media during Gay Games IV, Mark Tewkesbury did so during the 1990 Gay Games in Vancouver.

Gay Men in Mainstream Sport

After interviewing numerous gay male athletes, Dan Woog suggests that the climate for individual gay male athletes within the US may not be as hostile as that experienced in team sports.¹⁷¹ Sociological research by Messner and Sabo has demonstrated that the male bonding required in teams involves a very close homosociability based significantly on the strong adherence to group values and norms, including the exclusion of women, the denigration of the feminine and the homosexual, and an underlying erotic bond between men in the team.¹⁷² The playing field is where boys and men enjoy physical contact and show affection to each other and they are often naked together in the locker room. Yet, overt homophobic and misogynist locker room talk safely frames this homoeroticism in a macho and heterosexist discourse. Some coaches are also known to use homophobia and sexism as a motivational and team building tool.¹⁷³ This can reinforce the already existent anti-gay feelings of the team and can play on the vulnerabilities of gender identity and sexual development of boys and young men.

Messner also observes that it is through these sports practices - of denigration and expulsion of the feminine and the homosexual from within and without - that heterosexual masculinity is collectively constructed.¹⁷⁴ Homophobia itself comes to be equated with 'true' masculinity. It is understandable that gay men remain invisible in this environment. Some closeted gay men engage in the aggressive contact sports to prove their masculinity to themselves and conceal their secret from the world. We

¹⁷¹ Woog, Jocks. *True Stories of America's Gay Male Athletes*, p. xiv.

¹⁷² Messner, *Sex, Violence and Power*, p. 119-120

¹⁷³ Messner, *Sex, Violence and Power*, p. 108.

¹⁷⁴ Messner, *Sex, Violence and Power*, p. 47.

know that Waddell did this in his football playing and Olympic decathlete years. He felt “compelled to go along with a lot of locker room garbage” because he wanted the “macho image of an athlete” and protected himself with a very hard shell.¹⁷⁵ Ian Roberts adopted the same strategy for most of his rugby career. Fear of exposure can accentuate homophobic behaviour. In this masculine proving ground of close bodies, denial, fear and the public gaze it isn’t surprising that sports, particularly of the team varieties, are seen as one of the last acceptable - even celebrated - realms of homophobic discrimination and abuse - as if they are trapped in a time warp.¹⁷⁶

Lesbian Women in Mainstream Sport

Compared to men’s sport, homophobia and heterosexism have significantly different histories, structures and effects for women. For instance, sport did provide a haven for women who did not fit the post war heterosexual ideal and lesbians in particular found an avenue in sports like softball to build community and cultural connections. The second wave feminist movement of the 1970s also had a significant impact on women’s involvement in sport and this set the scene for lesbian sportswomen.

¹⁷⁵ Waddell interviewed in Messner, *Sex, Violence and Power*, p. 116.

¹⁷⁶ Gay actors, musicians, artists, even politicians are more visible than gay male athletes throughout most of the world. One of the main managers in the participation division of the Australian Institute of Sport, Debbie Simms, commented that of all the areas of inequality and discrimination in sport, homosexuality was the most difficult to deal with. Silence and denial are the main responses to this issue in most men’s and women’s sport in Australia. Even though there is a legal obligation to provide a non-discriminatory environment for lesbian and gay sports participants only a handful of sports organisations in Australia have anti-discrimination policies and procedures that encompass sexual orientation. From author’s research into this during 1998-1999 (including surveying all peak sports organisations in Australia and some in-depth interviewing of sports administrators).

Second Wave Feminism

The second wave feminist movement of the 1970s promoted social and political changes that improved women's access to and acceptance in sport. The fitness boom of the 1980s also encouraged more women to take up sport and fitness. Title IX legislation in the US in 1972 was significant in opening up sports opportunities and resources for girls and women in the US.¹⁷⁷ This federal law prohibited sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds. Universities and colleges spending on mens and women's sports' programs were required to be more even handed. As a result the number of women participating in intercollegiate athletics increased from 300,000 (pre-1972) to 2.25 million in 1997.¹⁷⁸ Hargreaves documents the introduction of gender equity programs in sport within Western nations during the 1980s and states that:

In all Western countries, philosophies about equalising gender relations in sports are becoming legitimised through the legislative procedures of governments and sports organisations.¹⁷⁹

Women's sport promotion programs have had positive results in Australia, Canada, Britain and parts of Europe.¹⁸⁰ It has become much more socially acceptable for

¹⁷⁷ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁷⁸ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁷⁹ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, p. 183.

¹⁸⁰ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 181-184.

women and girls in most Western countries to engage in all kinds of sport and the athletic and mildly muscular look is certainly in vogue.¹⁸¹

In fact, girls and women directly benefited from the health and fitness boom that began in the 1970s in many western countries. Outdoor recreational sports such as jogging, bushwalking, sailboarding, waterskiing, recreational cycling and surfing were taken up by men and women for their health benefits and social enjoyment. Indoor fitness activities such as weight training, exercise to music and lap swimming also became popular. Leisure and fitness centres were built, the body beautiful was cultivated and a whole new business area of consumer capitalism was developed. Mike Featherstone discusses how body maintenance and the 'look' of the body are central to this new consumerism that have been taken up in these exercise industries.¹⁸² Girls and women in particular have been persuaded by the marketing and advertising of this industry to participate in aerobics, weight training and other sporting and fitness activities, so as to lose weight and enhance their sex appeal. Hargreaves points out that the ideologies of health and sexiness and the centrality of the fit, athletic looking female body to this new consumerism, presents a new idealised femininity.¹⁸³ Musculinisation is acceptable for women so long as it is not over produced and it is heterosexualised. Gay men and lesbians have also been influenced by this consumerist fitness boom, an issue explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

¹⁸¹ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 180 – 184.

¹⁸² Mike Featherstone, 'The Body in Consumer Culture' *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1983), pp.18-33.

¹⁸³ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 158-162.

The 'Lesbian Label'

Despite these social advances for women in sport and a greater social acceptance of lesbians in many Western societies, the use of the lesbian label to preserve traditional gender boundaries, and stigmatise lesbians is still a dominant practice in contemporary sport. By being involved in the masculine territory of certain sports (particularly those emphasising strength, power and muscularity) women sports administrators, coaches and athletes of all sexual orientations have to continually prove their 'femininity' to be acceptable.¹⁸⁴ Lenskyj links these physical traits of hegemonic masculinity developed by sport with supposed masculine personality traits such as 'risk taking, dominance and aggression.'¹⁸⁵ When sportswomen excel in these areas their minds and bodies can be changed, an empowerment that according to Lenskyj could jeopardize 'the entire balance of power of the sexes'.¹⁸⁶ Kolnes suggests that in sport femininity acts as a code word for heterosexuality. Examples of emphasised femininity and heterosexual normalcy are numerous, for instance: the makeup, feminine dress and deportment classes that have been a regular feature of a number of national women's sporting teams; the heterosexy calendars featuring individual and team's of sports women; and the emphasis on the heterosexual relationships of sportswomen in media coverage.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ L. Kolnes, 'Heterosexuality as an Organising Principle in Women's Sport', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol, 30, no. 1 (1995).

¹⁸⁵ Helen Lenskyj, Dennis Hemphill and Caroline Symons, 'Introduction', Hemphill and Symons (eds) *Gender, Sexuality and Sport: A Dangerous Mix* (Petersham, NSW: Walla Walla Press, 2002), p.

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¹⁸⁶ Lenskyj, et al, 'Introduction', p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 68-75, and Helen Lenskyj, 'Sport and the Threat to Gender Boundaries', *Sporting Traditions*, vol. 12, no. 1 (November 1995), pp. 47-60.

This fear of the 'lesbian label' is based on deep-seated prejudices and negative stereotypes. Griffin outlines a number of these including the 'sexual predator' and the poor role model, both considered especially dangerous for young female athletes.¹⁸⁸ There is also the myth of the lesbian as super athlete – supposedly more masculine, extraordinarily strong, confident, competent and aggressive - than heterosexual sports women – was played out in the media coverage of the 1998 Australian Open. During these championships the tabloid press and television sensationalised French tennis champion Amile Mauresmo's lesbianism, linking it to masculine strength and predatory power on the court. This occurred in the headlines after Martina Hingis had likened Mauresmo to a half man for having a girlfriend, and Lindsay Davenport had described her tennis contest with Mauresmo as like playing against a man.¹⁸⁹ Contrast such sensational accounts with the positive and persistent attention that the media pays to the love interests and 'normal' domestic arrangements of heterosexual sportswomen and it becomes apparent who the good girls and the bogeywomen are.¹⁹⁰ Other outstanding women athletes such as Martina Navratilova, Babe Didrikson and Dawn Fraser have had their musculature and supposed homosexuality linked to unfair advantage. These myths can reinforce the association of power and aggression with masculinity and thus call into question the degree to which these outstanding sports women are 'real' women.

The Mauresmo incident highlights the way homophobia can be used as a psychological tactic to unsettle opponents. Mauresmo reported being under immense

¹⁸⁸ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁸⁹ Peter Kell, *Good Sports. Australian Sport and the Myth of the Fair Go* (Annadale, NSW: Pluto Press, 2000), pp. 128-136.

¹⁹⁰ Jim McKay, *No Pain, No Gain: Sport and Australian Culture* (Sydney: Prentice Hall, 1991); Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 68-70; Kell, *Good Sports*, pp. 128-136.

pressure from this media frenzy, and this had a subsequent impact on her tennis form during the Australian Open. It should be noted that the organising body of the Open, Tennis Australia, were not the discriminating party in this instance.

Conventional gender boundaries are also maintained and women's sport is controlled through the reinforcement of the myth that lesbians wield significant power and influence over women's sport.¹⁹¹ The media, general public and sport administrators responses to cricketer Denise Annette's accusation of homosexual bias in team selection for the Australian women's cricket tour of New Zealand in 1995, illustrates this fabrication beautifully.¹⁹² Before this 'scandal' Australian women's cricket received minuscule media coverage even though they had won countless world cup victories. A media feeding frenzy and sanctimonious editorials ensued with some of the countries leading newspapers calling for the sport to "examine its conscience" and "face up to prejudice charges". Burroughs, Seebohm and Ashburn argue that this widespread media attention was not only motivated by homophobia and male reporter's prurient fascination with lesbians. It was also driven by a heterosexual backlash at the increasing visibility and demands for anti-discrimination and harassment free work and sport environments of lesbians and gay men.

Not only were the cricketers that competed on this tour besieged and harassed continually by the media to single out who was gay - the whole of women's cricket underwent an inquiry into the charges of prejudice. A Code of Conduct was introduced which among other things aimed to "eliminate the existence of any

¹⁹¹ Griffin, *Strong, Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 60-62.

¹⁹² Angela Burroughs, Liz Ashburn and Leonie Seebohm, "A Leso Story": A Case Study of Australian Women's Cricket and its Media Experience' *Sporting Traditions*, vol.12, no.1 (November 1995), pp. 27-47.

overtones of a homosexual culture that may exist in the sport”.¹⁹³ Not one sport’s organisation came forth to defend the Australian Women’s Cricket Council, not even the main advocate for women’s sport; the Australian Sports Commission’s Women and Sport Unit. Predictably, the Women in Sport Unit itself has been referred to as the “Lesbian in Sport Unit” by male sports administrators.¹⁹⁴ Lesbians are easy scapegoats for image issues, and a variety of other perceived problems in women’s sport.

There are many examples of this manipulated belief that lesbians run and ruin women’s sport. Griffin cites the claims by numerous softball coaches in the US that a “lesbian mafia” dominates the National Softball Association.¹⁹⁵ The Nabisco Dinah Shore professional women’s golf tournament, held during the 1990s, has also been singled out as ‘parading defiant lesbians’ to the chagrin of the image conscious Ladies Professional Golf Association management, as well as the sponsors and promoters. This tournament is well known as a major lesbian social event and thousands of openly lesbian women make their pilgrimage every year to enjoy the parties, socialising and golf spectacle. The fear of negative publicity is so great that the power of the pink (or purple) dollar at this event, whilst made the most of in terms of profits, is still pushed hypocritically to the background for the supposed benefit of maintaining a wholesome image.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Burroughs et al, “ A Leso Story”, p. 43.

¹⁹⁴ Jim McKay, *Managing Gender: Affirmative Action and Organisational Power in Australian, Canadian and New Zealand Sport* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 92-93.

¹⁹⁵ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 60-62.

¹⁹⁶ S. Mansfield, ‘Gay Golf’, *The Age* (Saturday 3 May 1997), pp. A24-25.

Considering that most lesbian sportswomen, sports administrators and coaches, particularly at the elite level, are not public about their sexual orientation, it is interesting that they are seen to be so powerful and threatening in the sports world. When they are open, they are vulnerable in a number of ways: negative media coverage, negative stereotyping, discrimination and harassment, lack of understanding, support and respect from fellow athletes, coaches and managers, potential if not real loss in financial rewards, and employment insecurity. This is definitely not the position of the powerful and the specially privileged.

Sporting Climates for Lesbians and Gay Men

Griffin summarises the effects of these negative and destructive stereotypes on the everyday lives of lesbian athletes, coaches and sports administrators. She identifies three main climates that permeate the cultural, institutional and competitive contexts for lesbians involved with ‘mainstream’ sport from school through to the professional level.¹⁹⁷ These climates are not formalised, rather they have developed out of day-to-day social practices. The most difficult climate for lesbian sportswomen is characterised by hostility, discrimination and harassment. It is one in which lesbian participation in sport, whether concealed or not, is considered a major and unwanted problem. Griffin cites a number of examples of lesbian college and professional athletes who through having their sexual orientation revealed were dismissed from their teams.¹⁹⁸ To even be suspected of being a lesbian is dangerous in a hostile climate and many lesbians have to not only conceal their significant life partners, lovers and general private lives, but they also have to put on elaborate performances

¹⁹⁷ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 92-107.

¹⁹⁸ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 93-98.

to continually confirm their heterosexuality. Their appearance, friendships with other women and living arrangements can be scrutinised by head coaches and Athletic Directors who are pursuing anti-lesbian policies.

Some lesbian coaches or athletes experience direct harassment in the form of snide comments, being the butt of gossip and jokes, verbal abuse, graffiti, notes in their mailboxes and abusive phone calls.¹⁹⁹ Team-mates can be unfriendly, exclusionary and abusive when they find out one of their fellow team mates is gay. Closeted and fearful lesbian players and coaches in this hostile climate can also be hostile toward other lesbian sportswomen, believing that such behaviour will draw any suspicion well away from them. Other researchers have also documented the hostile environment that lesbians can experience in sport within the US, Canada, Australia and England.²⁰⁰ In countries with anti-discrimination laws that cover sexual orientation - such as Australia, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada and South Africa as well as some states of the US, blatant discrimination may not be as prevalent. Factors such as regionality and the religiosity of an area can also affect the level of hostility experienced by lesbians and gay men.²⁰¹ The sports environment of

¹⁹⁹ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 93-98.

²⁰⁰ For England see Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, pp. 260-264, S. Squires and A. Sparkes, 'Circles of Silence. Sexual Identity in Physical Education and Sport', *Sport Education and Society*, vol. 1. no. 1 (1996); G. Clarke, 'Outlaws in Sport and Education? Exploring the Sporting and Education Experiences of Lesbian Physical Education Teachers', in L. Lawrence, E. Murdoch and S. Parker (eds), *Professional and Development Issues in Leisure, Sport and Education* (UK: Leisure Studies Association, 1999) pp. 45-58; For research into the experiences of lesbians in Canada and Australia sport see H. J. Lenskyj, 'Unsafe at Home Base: Women's Experiences of Sexual Harassment in University Sport and Physical Education', *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, vol. 1. no. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 19-33 and 'Sexuality and Femininity in Sport Contexts: Issues and Alternatives' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (November, 1995) vol. 18. no. 4., pp. 357-376. For research into the experiences of lesbians and homophobia in Australian sports organisations also see J. McKay, *Managing Gender*. G. Hekma conducted an extensive survey of sports organisations in the Netherlands, investigating homosexual discrimination. This research appears in his *Al ze Maar Niet Provocern. Discriminatie van Homoseksuele Mannen en Lesbische Vrouwen in de Georganiseerde Sport*. (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994).

²⁰¹ Homophobia can be more pronounced in country areas.

gay men, especially in mainstream team sports can also be characterised as hostile and sometimes downright dangerous.

The second climate for lesbian sportswomen identified by Griffin is one characterised by conditional tolerance – it’s alright if you are on the team, but please keep yourself invisible.²⁰² This resembles the US military’s “don’t ask don’t tell policy” concerning the existence of lesbians and gay men in the forces. Sports organisations use this strategy particularly in their marketing practices of women’s sport. Such collaborative denial means that heterosexual sportswomen don’t really have to question the nature of systematic prejudice experienced by their lesbian team mates. It places lesbians once again in the position of having to continually monitor their appearance and social relationships to not call attention to their sexual orientation.

Some lesbian athletes chose not to make their sexual preference public, dividing off their sporting and private lives. They claim their only interest is the sport itself and their athletic ability and engagement is all that matters. Hence, for them raising issues of homophobia has the potential of spoiling their pure sports experience with messy politics. There is a significant social component of the sport’s experience in which friendships, the sharing of day-to-day life stories, special celebrations, even the pleasure of having significant people in the audience to witness important sports performances, all usually require the interaction of a sportsperson’s personal and sporting life. Choosing to remain in the closet is both an accommodating and limiting strategy in this context. Demonstrations of same-sex affection with a partner,

²⁰² Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp. 99-103.

unfeminine dress and deportment are some of the social performances that have to be hidden and policed.

Both the hostile and conditionally tolerant climates produce circles of silence around the actual existence and experiences of lesbian - and gay male - sportspersons.²⁰³

Discussing matters of sexuality that raise issues of power, intimacy and vulnerability, in themselves, usually make people uncomfortable. Add to this the veil of silence that often surrounds issues of homosexuality in the sporting environment and you have a powerful block to even broaching issues of prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Instead, the lesbian or gay sportsperson has to deal with such systemic difficulties alone, invisible, in silence and often in shame.

The most affirming climate for sporting lesbians and gay men is characterised by openness and inclusion. Coaches, administrators and players are welcoming of diversity in the sexual orientation of their athletes and colleagues. They are prepared to open up the dialogue concerning homophobia, understanding that prejudice can have a limiting effect on all participants and that positive leadership is necessary to ensure this process of openness and inclusion is effective. Griffin notes that there are few open and inclusive sporting climates in mainstream US.²⁰⁴ Most are hostile or conditionally tolerant and especially with women's sport, the more media profile and image conscious a sport is, the less open and inclusive of lesbians it becomes. The most open and inclusive sports environments for lesbians and gay men are those created by gay people. In some women's sports - like softball, lesbians had been

²⁰³ S. Squires and A. Sparkes use this metaphor in their article on lesbian and gay identity management within physical education and sport in Britain: 'Circles of Silence. Sexual Identity in Physical Education and Sport'.

²⁰⁴ Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets*, pp.103-106.

active for decades.²⁰⁵ On a broader scale it appears that during the late 1970s gay men and lesbians started organising their own sports clubs and leagues in the major US cities where gay people lived. Tom Waddell's ideas for the Gay Games in part began with observing the development of gay men's tennis and bowling leagues.

Celebration of the 'Butch'

Whilst the elite 'butch' lesbian sportswoman may receive negative and homophobic treatment within mainstream society and sports circles, she has been celebrated as sexually attractive and heroic within lesbian culture. Navratilova provides the best example of this. Through training hard to develop a powerful, muscular and agile body and a forceful and dynamic tennis game, Navratilova was significant in transforming women's elite level tennis. Her athletic brilliance ensures that she remains popular amongst tennis audiences, although she is still subject to court-side homophobic abuse as well.²⁰⁶ Through this sporting brilliance, her courage to 'come out' and her ongoing commitment to fighting for social justice, including gay and lesbian rights, Navratilova has been celebrated by lesbians as heroic and inspirational. Through being so unapologetic and visible as an exceptional lesbian sportswoman, she presents a courageous and positive image and helps open the way for other elite lesbian sporting champions to follow.²⁰⁷

Mauresmo was one of these champions to follow – 'coming out' at the young age of 19, just at the start of her tennis career. Mauresmo also had to contend with negative

²⁰⁵ Cahn, 'From the "Muscle Moll" to the "Butch" Ballplayer...

²⁰⁶ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, p.148.

²⁰⁷ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, p.148. Also see Diane Hamer 'Netting the Press: Playing with Martina' in Diane Hamer and Belinda Budge, *The Good, The Bad and The Gorgeous. Popular Culture's Romance with Lesbianism* (Hammersmith, London: Pandora, 1994), pp. 57-77.

stereotyping and harassment from players and the media. Both of these sports women were muscular and powerful – ‘butch’ – a derogatory term within mainstream society and celebrated term of embodiment, agency and identity for many lesbians.

Sally Munt writes about the history and meaning of ‘butch’ in lesbian culture thus:

Butch is the recognizable public form of lesbianism; despite the media hype of chic femme in the early 1990s, it communicates a singular verity, to dykes and homophobes alike. Butch – despite the evidence of butch heterosexual women and the passion of femmes for women – is the gospel of lesbianism, inevitably interpreted as the true revelation of female homosexuality.²⁰⁸

Muscularity, power, achievement, all suggest agency, sexual and erotic potency. The athletic butch is erotically attractive for many lesbians.²⁰⁹ She is also subversive of gender. Sports - especially of the more masculine inscribed varieties – provides an ideal environment for the muscular, active and butch sportswoman to develop their skills, abilities, identities and embodiments. Whilst at an elite and community level lesbian athletes in general and the more masculine styled – butch – lesbians in particular – elicit homophobia – they can also refuse this homophobia and heterosexism.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Sally Munt, *Heroic Desire* (London: Cassell, 1998), p. 54. Also quoted in Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*. P. 150.

²⁰⁹ Jayne Caudwell, ‘Women’s Football in the United Kingdom. Theorising Gender and Unpacking the Butch Lesbian Image’ *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (November 1999), pp. 394-395.

²¹⁰ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, p. 151. Also see Caudwell, ‘Women’s Football in the United Kingdom.’

Tom Waddell's Dancing: Some Concluding Observations

In common with so many people, Tom Waddell's passion for sport and dance is bound up with the joy of vigorous and sensual embodied expression, of physicality and movement, of performing valued skills and receiving recognition. Tom also loved the technical precision, historical significance and aesthetic form of the movements he performed so well in ballet and athletics:

I think ballet dancers are the greatest athletes in the world - far and away - it takes such coordination, strength, endurance ...I liked the finiteness of the motions in ballet - that there was a historical significance to all the moves, and they were labelled, and different people could execute them in different ways. To me, track and field is that same kind of beauty. When I watch runners, I just see motion in its most beautiful form - someone running for speed. Or a pole-vaulter or a high jumper - here's someone propelling their body through the air to achieve a particular thing. Now whether it's a jete or a world record in high jump doesn't make any difference - it's that particular kind of motion, it's very beautiful to me.²¹¹

Dance wasn't featured at the first Gay Games. In spite of his vision for the Games, Tom saw a very limited role for cultural expression. Other than traditional sports, cultural performance was restricted to the opening and closing ceremonies, which were strongly influenced by the Olympics, and mass choirs and brass bands. Tom was interested principally in exploding the stereotype that gay men didn't play sport - and by implication - were not real men. Gay dancers of the classical or modern kind only confirmed the stereotype of dance as a strongly coded feminine activity.

²¹¹ Tom Waddell quoted in an interview with Michael Messner in *Sex, Violence and Power in Sport*, p. 115.

The desire to be masculine could be realised through playing the more traditionally masculine sports well. As Gareth Owen so succinctly states in a conference paper of masculinities and gay male sports involvement:

It is a lifestyle choice, where gay men choose to identify with a sporting masculinity which embodies many of the traditional characteristics of exemplary hegemonic masculinity, such as strength, hardness and competitiveness.²¹²

Gay male sexual desire is also at play here. Tom, and many other gay men for that matter, desire masculine men. Gay masculinity constructed through sport performance provides this idealised sexual object. Pronger also discusses the attraction of many gay men to masculinity and the importance of the athletic male body to this masculine eroticisation.²¹³ However, this traditional and hegemonic masculinity is hard for gay men to achieve. In the sports arena, the embodied qualities like hardness, strength, aggression, courage, endurance, the ability to withstand pain and to compete against and achieve over other men, are performed and proven. This is the arena where a more 'authentic' masculinity can be made. Bob Connell encapsulates this gay masculine identity in his conceptualisation of "the very straight gay".²¹⁴ Tom's valorisation of sport within his life as well as the Gay Games is a defining statement of his identity as a masculine gay man. Through sport Tom and other gay men could prove themselves as "authentically masculine as heterosexual men".²¹⁵ This in turn can act to reinforce the normative value of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity.

²¹² Gareth Owen, 'Catching Crabs: Sport, Masculinity and Gay Identities', unpublished paper presented at the international Queer Studies Conference *Out From the Centre*, held at the University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia, October 29-30, 2002, p. 8.

²¹³ Pronger, *The Arena of Masculinity*, pp. 128-143 and chapter 4.

²¹⁴ Connell, *Masculinities*, pp. 143-159.

²¹⁵ Owen, 'Catching Crabs: Sport, Masculinity and Gay Identities', p. 8.

Lesbians playing sport also confirmed a cultural myth, although Tom Waddell doesn't appear to have been too concerned with this normalisation problem. However, he did acknowledge the patriarchal traditions of sport and the disadvantages women suffered that obstructed their full participation. The benefits of sport and the legitimacy the gay community could gain from staging a traditional Games were good for lesbians too.²¹⁶ Tom put his rhetoric into action by coaching women as well as men in athletics in preparation for the Games, as well as encouraging women and men to co chair in most positions of leadership within the organisations of these early Gay Games.

Lesbians were also influential in the shaping of the first Gay Games. Their story will be told more fully in the next chapter of this thesis. Of greatest concern to women leaders within the Gay Games organisation was the provision of equal opportunities for women to play sport and be represented within the organisational structure and decision making of the Games.²¹⁷ Leading women also valued the opportunity to bring the quite separate gay men's and women's communities together through 'wholesome sport' at the Gay Games.²¹⁸

This chapter has explored the history and connections between gender, sexuality and sport within Western society and especially the US over the past one hundred years. The nature, extent and origins of heterosexism and homophobia in sport are also examined. These are not merely issues of individual prejudice. Rather, they are social expressions and beliefs embedded in systems of power that shape, conserve and

²¹⁶ Interview with Lewinstein.

²¹⁷ Interview with Lewinstein.

²¹⁸ Interview with Lewinstein.

contest gender relations. Sports, particularly the most valorised varieties, were shown to have a central role in this social construction of gender and sexuality. Developed to make strong, virile and ‘normal’ men, they continue to masculinise and celebrate hegemonic males as well as marginalise and render inferior women and gay men.

The emblematic life-story of Gay Games founder, Tom Waddell, was used to demonstrate his difficult dance – reconciling his sense of acceptable masculinity with his stigmatised sexual orientation. Macho sports were important avenues for Tom to conceal his sexuality, express his talents and physicality, and eventually gain reassurance and self-acceptance as a gay man. This dance forms the backdrop to the shaping and development of the first Gay Games. The inclusion of dance that occurred with the growth of the Cultural Festival within the Gay Games is documented in subsequent chapters. It is one of the barometers of gay and lesbian cultural celebration. Where dancing with the conventions of gender, sexuality and sport are embraced.

Tom’s story is also positioned during the heyday of the civil rights movement in the US, and embodies similar tensions, contradictions, ironies and optimism. In a sense Tom’s life is a microcosm of the larger social order coming to terms with changing conceptions of gender and sexuality and their impact on sport. His story generates the beginnings of a social history of the Gay Games.

Chapter 3 We are normal!

“Challenge in 1982”: Gay Games I

In organising the Gay Olympic Games, the SFAA sought to ‘create a more realistic image of homosexual men and women in all societies’ and ‘to provide more alternatives for homosexual men and women to move into the mainstream of their respective societies’. The word Olympic was no doubt chosen to foster a wholesome, normal image of homosexuals. Denying SFAA use of the word thwarts that purpose.¹

Introduction

Tom Waddell and Dick Schapp recount the origins of the Gay Games in Waddell’s biography, *Gay Olympian*.² Waddell and Mark Brown, the sports editor of the city’s gay newspaper the Bay Area Reporter (BAR), were watching television one day in June 1980 when they happened upon coverage of the Gay Men’s Bowling Tournament. Waddell was impressed because: “the competitors were strong and skilful athletes, clearly bowlers first and gay second”.³ This sporting image reinforced, for Waddell, the ‘normality’ of the majority of gay men – they were middle class professionals who “voted, ate out, bowled and played softball and rooted for the 49ers”.⁴ Waddell didn’t see them “lusting for attention” like the drag queens and leather men whom he considered received a disproportionate amount of

¹ Quoted from the San Francisco Arts and Athletics (SFAA) ‘Petition for Rehearing and Suggestions for Rehearing En Banc, filed dated March 22 1986. Archived in San Francisco Public Library (SFPL), Federation of Gay Games Archive (FGGA) Box 1, Series 1, Gay Games I, folder 1, 1986. The quote within this quote first appeared in the original defence mounted by SFAA in their legal battle to retain the usage of the word Olympics in the title of the first Gay Games (Gay Olympic Games). See the legal document: *International Olympic Committee v. San Francisco Arts and Athletics*, 219 U.S.P.Q. 982, 985 (N.D.Cal. 1982). SFAA formed in 1982.

² Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian: The Life and Death of Dr. Tom Waddell* (New York: Knopf, 1996), pp. 145-149.

³ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 145.

⁴ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 145.

mainstream media attention. Waddell lamented the way that this attention reinforced for many in straight society the negative stereotypes of gay life.⁵

Waddell and Brown were excited about the idea of staging an adult athletics event modelled on the Olympics, but modified to include everyone – all ages, races, sexual orientations, and to provide greater equality in the participation of men and women.

Waddell elaborated on this perspective in a New York radio interview just before the first Gay Games in August of 1982.⁶ He saw sport as an excellent ‘melting pot’ that could bring the disparate gay and lesbian communities together.⁷ The lack of involvement and connection amongst men and women in these communities was a particularly important one for Waddell.⁸ Brown emphasised the way that sports such as ten-pin bowling, softball and tennis had already provided important social settings for gay men in the larger cities of the US.

Not long after these conversations, the first meeting of the United States Gay Olympic Committee (USGOC) was held on June 15, 1980.⁹ Hollywood stunt man and rodeo champion, Paul Mart, joined Waddell and Brown on this committee. His work involved plenty of international travel and hence gave Mart the opportunity to promote the concept of a Gay Olympics more widely.¹⁰

⁵ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 145.

⁶ Interview with Tom Waddell and Charles Carson on WBAI – FM (New York radio station) “Gay Rap” This show previewed the first Gay Games. Weds, August 18, 1982. This radio interview was sent to me by Charles Carson. Carson is a Director on the FGG. Archived in Victoria University, Sunbury campus, Caroline Symons Gay Games Personal Archive.

⁷ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 153.

⁸ Interview with Sara Lewistein, San Francisco November 1996.

⁹ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 146.

¹⁰ Interview with Paul Mart, Melbourne, January 1997.

It appears that around the same time, Waddell and Brown made public these Games ideas at the San Francisco gay and lesbian community's annual awards night – the Cable Car Awards.¹¹ During the awards they discussed the idea of staging a small Olympic event for gay and lesbian sport participants throughout the world. Brown did a fair bit of the initial organising during 1980-1981 when Waddell was working as medical adviser with an international company establishing hospitals and medical operations in the Middle East.¹²

On Waddell's return to San Francisco in 1981, the organisational momentum for the first Gay Games – which was originally titled the Gay Olympic Games - moved into full gear. These Games were scheduled for August 1982, leaving under one year to put on an international sporting event for a rather disparate, closeted and unorganised target population. Waddell and his friends, Eric Wilkinson and Roger Tubb, conducted a rudimentary feasibility study. They visited the major cities of the US by car to drum up interest in the gay bars and clubs. In the promotional brochures for the Games, Waddell wrote:

It is an opportunity to expand beyond a falsely tainted image. It is an opportunity to show that gay men and women, like all other responsible citizens of the United States, participate in the same ideal.¹³

This was the starting story for the first Gay Games. Using sport as the vehicle to 'mainstream' gays and lesbians was one of the principal motivations of the Gay Games founders.

¹¹ Interview with Mart. Corroborated in *Metra, Bi Weekly Magazine*. 'Gay Games Issue' (August 1982), p. 2. This gay magazine was published in Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario Canada.

¹² A multi-national conglomerate called the Whittaker Corporation. Tom Waddell ran the companies operations in Saudi Arabia.

¹³ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 147.

This chapter will tell the story of the Gay Games founding philosophies, aims, format, organisation and outcomes. It will also examine the challenges organisers faced and the opportunities provided to establish this first international gay and lesbian sports event in one of the most gay friendly and trend setting cities of the world – San Francisco.

The modern Olympic Games was the inspirational model for these very first Gay Games. At the same time, it also presented Gay Games organisers with one of their first significant legal challenges – a ‘David and Goliath battle’ with the United States Olympic Committee over the use of the name ‘Olympics’. Modelling the Gay Games on the Olympic Games also produced its own tensions, the main one being the extent to which the Gay Games would be a mainstream event or one serving as an alternative vision for sport and the gay and lesbian community. We will now turn to the history and social setting of these first Gay Olympic Games.

The Gay Olympic Games

San Francisco Arts and Athletics Inc (SFAA) formed from the USGOC as the representative, tax- exempt organising body for the Games. The term ‘Arts’ was primarily used in the organisations title to satisfy the requirements of tax-exemption status under California state law. A sporting body in itself could not qualify for this exemption at this time.

Tom Waddell chaired the management board of SFAA, fund raised and developed the overall Gay Olympic Games philosophy. As a past Olympian he had experienced the magic as well as the excesses of the modern Olympics. He enjoyed the strong

camaraderie of the US decathletes' training and competing together for one of the three positions on the US team bound for the Mexico Olympics in 1968. Even at this elite level he experienced a cooperative, supportive and social environment rare in many athletic contexts where the stakes are so high. This was common amongst decathletes.¹⁴ He appreciated the power of sport in providing a focus for personal achievement, group belonging and identity, as well as sensuous physical expression and enjoyment.

Sport, with its common appeal, was also thought to be readily understandable and potentially exciting.¹⁵ According to anthropologist Jim MacAloon, this power is obvious in the global appeal of the modern Olympic Games - an event that has grown in scale and significance over the past century to eclipse all others.¹⁶ For MacAloon, the Olympics are more than a world sporting championships; highly ritualised opening and closing ceremonies designed to state their serious, even sacred nature mark it out. This symbolic core of the Olympics celebrates the imagined communities of the individual nations competing as well as the shared humanity of all involved.¹⁷

Waddell was proud of his selection in the 1968 United States Olympic Team, and of his sixth place at these Games in one of the most demanding of athletic events - decathlon. He had also attended the 1976 Montreal Olympics as the team doctor for

¹⁴ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁵ J. Gildersleeve and L. Wardlaw 'Gay Olympiad 1' in *Coming Up* (August 1982), San Francisco. This Gay Games I newsletter discussed the philosophy of the Gay Games and included an interview with Tom Waddell. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series I, Gay Games I folder, 1982.

¹⁶ John MacAloon, 'Double Visions: Olympic Games and American Culture', in J. Segrave and D. Chu (eds) *The Olympic Games in Transition* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics, 1988), pp. 279-280.

¹⁷ MacAloon, 'Double Visions', pp. 284-287. Also see John MacAloon, 'Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies'. In John MacAloon (ed.), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle* (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1984), pp. 241-280.

the Saudi Arabian team.¹⁸ The strength of these experiences, as well as the desire for respectability and the overall collective impact of the Olympic Games, accounts for the ready conceptualisation of the first Gay Games as a Gay Olympic Games.

The Olympic name, organisational body (USGOC) and the ceremonies and rituals, were some of the strong manifestations of the Olympic influence. At the opening ceremony of Gay Games I, held on Saturday August 28 1982, SFAA Board members wore ceremonial suits and ties of blue, white and red that looked very similar to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC).¹⁹ There was a parade of athletes to mark the opening, and the recitation of a Games' oath.²⁰ Competitors were required to don athletic uniforms representing the city from which they came. All symbols and words depicted on these uniforms had to relate in a tasteful manner to this city of origin.²¹

Other ritual elements included the playing of the US national anthem at the beginning of most sporting events and at the opening and closing ceremonies. There was even a 4,000-mile torch relay originating from the Stonewall Inn, New York, carried by over 2,000 runners, walkers and cyclists, visiting over 50 cities in the US and culminating

¹⁸Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 139.

¹⁹ Conversations with Paul Mart and Larry Sheehan (interviewed in San Francisco, November 1996). Also evident in the official video of the opening ceremonies of Gay Games I, produced by DAWN (San Francisco, 1982), and II, produced by Male Entertainment Network (MEN) (One United Nations Plaza, San Francisco, CA: MEN, 1982, 1986). Archived in SFPL: FGGA.

²⁰ See Male Entertainment Network (MEN), *Highlights Video, Gay Games II*, (One United Nations Plaza, San Francisco, CA: MEN, 1986). Also outlined within the official programs of Gay Games I and II, SFPL, GGA, Box 1, Series 1 and 2, Folders 1 and 2.

²¹ SFAA, *San Francisco Arts and Athletics Presents the Gay Athletics Games and Cultural Week*. This document outlines the initial concept of Gay Games I, the sports to be staged, entry procedures, hosting arrangements, when and where the Games will take place, rules of conduct and uniforms, medal ceremonies and the cultural week of the Games. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series 1, folder 1.

with the lighting of the Gay Games flame at the Opening ceremony.²² Along with Waddell, past United States Olympians George Frenn and Susan McGrievy (nee Dougie Grey) were employed to promote and give respectability to the Games.²³ They carried one of the two torches used to light the Gay Olympic Flame in Kezar Stadium during the Opening ceremony.²⁴

Ceremonies had an air of formality and importance through carefully crafted speeches made by Congressman Phil Burton, Acting Mayor of the City of San Francisco, Diana Ward and by Tom Waddell as the Chairman of the Gay Games Board of Directors.²⁵ At the same time a more celebratory and humorous tone was set by the master of ceremonies - well known lesbian and gay writers Rita Mae Brown and Armistead Maupin. Entertainers Tina Turner and Stephanie Mills also rocked and rolled the Opening and Closing ceremony audiences respectively.²⁶

In the American tradition, the San Francisco Gay Freedom Marching Band, the Great American Yankee Freedom Band, a Twirling Corps and Flag Corps all put on colourful displays.²⁷ A massed gay and lesbian choir of 800 singers, Western dancers, a 20,000-balloon salute and a gigantic tea dance on the Kezar playing fields provided

²² B. Ayer Wood, 'Amidst a Storm of Controversy Over the Use of the Word "Olympics", The Games Went On. The Victory Was Ours. Gay Olympics'. *In Touch*, no. 74 (North Hollywood, CA, 19 December 1982), pp. 29-32.

²³ McGrievy was on the US swimming team at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Frenn represented the US at the Munich Olympics in 1972, where he set a world hammer throw record and won the gold medal.

²⁴ Wood, 'Admist a Storm of Controversy Over the Use of the Word "Olympics"', p. 32.

²⁵ Wood, 'Admist a Storm of Controversy Over the Use of the Word "Olympics"',

²⁶ SFAA, *Gay Athletic Games I* Official Program, Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series 1, folder 1 (1982), pp. 9 and 30.

²⁷ Wood, 'Admist a Storm of Controversy Over the Use of the Word "Olympics"', p. 32.

the finale to the closing ceremony. In keeping with Olympic tradition these Gay Games ceremonies were spectacular affairs.²⁸

The Olympic theme also featured in the promotional materials and imaging making of the Games. One of the main posters promoting the Gay Olympic Games depicted ancient Greek Olympic athletes. Another depicted the Gay Olympic version of the Olympic flame. The official Gay Games I program also featured ancient Greek athletes. This ancient Olympics did have some connections with a society in which homosexual relations amongst its free male citizens received social sanction.

Normalisation Through Sport

The Gay Olympic Games was envisaged as an exemplary sporting festival that aimed to enlighten people within and outside of the gay and lesbian communities. For the wider society this enlightening principally involved the questioning of several negative gay stereotypes: that gay men were weak and sissy like (did not play sport); that homosexuality involved simply a 'libidinous lifestyle' obsessed with sex and drug taking; and that homosexuals were abnormal and irresponsible.²⁹ By participating and achieving in sport at these Games, gay men could be shown to be just like other 'regular guys'. Lesbians were assumed to play sport anyway, so no stereotypes were thought to be in need of questioning here. However, the concentration on healthy physical contest and achievement within an apparently

²⁸ Ernie Potvin, 'Gays Renew Olympic Spirit: Athletics as 'Personal Best'', *Up date* Southern California's Gay Newspaper, Issue 91(September 10, 1982), p. 1 and 12.

²⁹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 145-149.

‘mainstream’ and official sporting environment was considered vital in this quest for respectability for lesbians as well gay men.

Evidence of this ‘normalising’ goal is plentiful in official documentation, conversations and interviews, and is enacted in a number of the ceremonies and regulations of the first Gay Games.³⁰ To maintain control of the overall image of the Games as a conventional sporting event involving ‘normal’ men and women, the Board of Directors of the first Gay Games kept a tight rein on information supplied to the straight and gay media.^{31 32} They were determined to control media content as much as possible, and in their words prevent the gay press from using Games images and stories for “pornographic purposes”.³³

Organisers explicitly emphasised in their media performances this ‘normalising’ purpose of the Gay Games. This is evident in the interview provided by Tom Waddell to the New York gay radio station in the lead up to the first Gay Games.³⁴ In this interview, Waddell laments the “limp wristed” image of gay male bowlers that appears in one gay sports news sheet, and cites the Gay Games as providing a more sporting and by implication more masculine alternative for gay sportsmen. It is evident in the pre-Games viewpoints of six key women organisers of the Games, as quoted in San Francisco’s main gay and lesbian newspaper – the BAR.³⁵ The chair of

³⁰ For instance, the promotional material quoted above, also see Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 149.

³¹ Carl. Carlson, ‘Commentary’, *The Voice*. San Francisco, vol 4, no.18 (Sept 10, 1982), p. 4.

³² According to *Update* reporter, Ernie Potvin, ‘over two hundred foreign and US press people covered the opening ceremony’. E. Potvin, ‘Gays Renew Olympic Spirit’, p. 1 and 12. The actual number of press covering the sporting and other official Gay Games I events is not documented.

³³ Carlson, ‘Commentary’, p.4.

³⁴ Interview on WBAI – FM (New York radio station) “Gay Rap”.

³⁵ Corinna Radigan, ‘Six Behind The Scenes Volunteers’, *Bay Area Reporter (BAR)* (August 1, 1982), vol XII, no. 30, p. 7. This is one of the main gay and lesbian newspapers of San Francisco.

the Gay Games swimming and diving event – Jill Ramsay is very clear on this point: “I totally believe that one of the main purposes of the Games is to present an image of the ‘normalness’ of gays to the straight world”.³⁶

As a result, drag queens were not permitted to wear their flamboyant attire at official Games events, and even the playful wearing of any aspects of drag (especially male to female), which often can accompany a gay event, was discouraged.³⁷ According to one of the SFAA Board members, Rosemary Mitchell, Waddell had several discussions with one of the main groups within the gay community that wore drag – the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.³⁸ He persuaded them to attend the Gay Games only in their sports attire. Mitchell also recalls that Waddell had similar conversations with the Leather community. They were also required to leave their leather attire in the closet and dress in ‘appropriate’ sports uniforms during the Games.

Charles Carson remembers engaging in some playful drag performance at a closed party that occurred after the Gay Games swimming competition. In keeping with this Games ethos of respectability, a drag informed relay, which was considered a part of the official swim meet, was not scheduled. Organisers understandably feared that the mainstream media would concentrate on these more flamboyant members and

³⁶ Radigan, ‘Six Behind The Scene Volunteers’, p. 7.

³⁷ FGG Director and swimming participant at the first Gay Games – Charles Carson confirms this. Female drag performers, known as drag kings, were not a feature of the gay and lesbian community of this time. They came into fashion during the mid 1990s.

³⁸ Interview with Rosemary Mitchell, San Francisco, November 1996. Mitchell was the Chair of the Ceremonies at these Gay Games, as well as a Board member of SFAA. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence did a lot of fundraising within the gay and lesbian community of San Francisco and were one of the first groups to promote safe sex during the early days of the AIDS crisis (See chapter 4). As an order of gay male nuns they tended to receive a lot of media attention for their mocking of religious institutions and beliefs.

performances within the gay community rather than the athletic endeavours of participants.

Leading organiser of the first two Gay Games, Sara Lewinstein – had this to say about Tom Waddell’s and the Board of SFAA’s perspective on the role of drag queens at the Games:

People thought Tom had a problem with Queens, but what Tom wanted was none coming in drag in opening and closing ceremonies. He wanted them just as men and women. They said this is how we like to dress. Not in these Gay Games you’re not. It was hard, we had to tell people what to wear... We didn’t want a bunch of Queens because when the media comes who do they concentrate on, the star athlete or the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. So the Games are about you and me and these people are getting all the show.³⁹

The Gay Games, according to Lewinstein, are “about sport and people having a go at their sport”. They are not a “playground” for “dressing up, dressing weird, undressing” and by implication dressing too much against the norms of gender or of sporting practice.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Lewinstein and Waddell also deemed public expressions of sexuality as inappropriate at a sporting event.

This separation of sex and sport was aligned to another stereotype the organisers were keen to undermine through the Games - the supposed unhealthy, irresponsible and sex obsessed lifestyle gay people were seen to lead. Participating in ‘healthy’ sport

³⁹ Sara Lewinstein was a member of the Board of Directors for Gay Games I and II. She was the co-chair of sport for Gay Games II. Interview with Lewinstein.

⁴⁰ Lewinstein’s fear that the Gay Games would be tarnished with bad press comes from her experiences of media coverage of Gay Day Parades: “ I know what they do in the Gay Day Parade here. They interview anyone that is dressed weird, or undressed, or not dressed. Not the people who have the right to say something about gay day – why the gay parade is important, why is it important to raise money for ” She is tired of being misrepresented by the media in this way and judging from the perspectives of other important organisers of these Games this is an important concern. From interview with Lewinstein. This debate concerning appropriate representation at Gay Pride events is apparently a common phenomenon.

presented a much better impression. co-chair of the tennis competition, Diane Richter, sums up this perspective: “The Games should give the straight community a better impression of Gays because drinking and drugs won’t be around; the world will be able to see that Gays are not sick or crazy”.⁴¹ A participant, and one of the Directors on the Federation of Gay Games – Gene Dermody – exemplifies the concern for the erotic in sport at these Games. As a dedicated wrestler, he objected to the majority of US gay wrestling clubs in existence during the 1970s and early 1980s because of their sexual nature. He describes the wrestling clubs of this time as being sex clubs, “a contact list and a facility where people would come and just sort of wrestle around and have sex”.⁴² Dermody recalls Tom Waddell and Paul Mart asking the founder of the San Francisco Wrestling Club, Don Young, to separate this club from the sexual aspects before they could stage the wrestling competition at the Games.⁴³

Dermody stated in his interview that he would not have attended the Games if these steps to make conventional sport central had not occurred, and he strongly believed that this was the perspective of many other keen gay and lesbian sportspersons.⁴⁴

Dermody reveals a great deal on this matter in the following passage from his interview:

I got there (Gay Games I) and realised that I was not the only one who was gay, the only one who was involved in wrestling on a legitimate level, coaching, participation and someone who had a life, but met other men who were into the same kind of thing. I got here and it wasn’t like what I feared it was gonna be after coming out in the 70s was. I feared it was gonna be this big sexual orgy and there was going to be very little attention paid to the details of this legitimate athletic event, and that’s the thing that a lot of people criticised Tom Waddell about in his book. They’re saying he was a fascist about running this sport...But he had to be that way if these Gay Games were gonna happen

⁴¹ Radigan, ‘Six Behind The Scenes Volunteers’.

⁴² Interview with Gene Dermody, San Francisco November 1996.

⁴³ Interview with Dermody.

⁴⁴ Interview with Dermody.

because too many people were pushing to make it a sleaze kind of you know, let's get together and have fun... when you look at it (Gay Game I) from a 1996 perspective it may look a little like internalised homophobia but you had to do that then because people like me would not have come.⁴⁵

Past US Olympian (1972), gold medallist and world hammer throw record holder, George Frenn, reveals that many gay athletes of Olympic calibre were too afraid to participate in the first Gay Games because they were fearful of the consequences of coming out in such an obviously gay event. For him:

Many athletes of Olympic calibre are not participating because they are afraid of the gay label. They are hurting themselves as well as others by remaining invisible. Most people don't realise how many gay athletes there are. If they knew life would be easier for us, and especially for those still in the closet.⁴⁶

Frenn had tried to coax some prominent athletes into attending the Games but found them very reluctant. By assessing the quality of the Games and the public's reaction to them he believed that more would participate in the next Gay Games.⁴⁷

There also appears to have been a general fear of gay bashing amongst gays and lesbians who needed to be reassured about participating in the Games. Tom Waddell appreciated this fear and wrote in a Games newsletter that participating was one important way of reducing this violence because the broader public could see that gays were “fully vested citizens” rather than “marginal beings” or even worse – sissies and weaklings (gay men).⁴⁸

The staging of the first Gay Games in the trend setting gay and lesbian city of San Francisco also appears to have caused some anxiety amongst more conservative and

⁴⁵ Interview with Dermody.

⁴⁶ 'L.A. Olympian Headlines Gay Games', *Village Voice, San Francisco*. vol. 4. no (17, August 1982), p. 6. This is a gay and lesbian newspaper based in San Francisco.

⁴⁷ 'L.A. Olympian Headlines Gay Games', p. 6.

⁴⁸ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 149.

closeted gays and lesbians who were not used to living so openly and freely. This freedom and strength of gay and lesbian community life made San Francisco an ideal setting for the Gay Olympic Games. However, numerous Games participants also appear to have needed reassurance concerning its legitimacy as a 'real' multi sports event. These issues of setting, civil and community support and sporting legitimacy will be explored in the subsequent section.

Setting the Scene: San Francisco During the Early 1980s

From the 1960s San Francisco was known as the premier city within the US and the most famous throughout the world as a haven for gays and lesbians. Many American gays and lesbians have moved there, and the city continues to be a place of pilgrimage for many others throughout the world.⁴⁹ The origins of this significance are with World War Two. As the main military port of departure and return for the Pacific theatres of war, San Francisco attracted ex-servicemen and women, many having been dishonourably discharged for being homosexual.⁵⁰

The first reformist gay and lesbian political organisations such as The Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis had their headquarters in San Francisco during the 1950s and 1960s.⁵¹ Gay social and commercial institutions and events such as bars, cafes, churches, community centres, newspapers, bath houses, dance parties, picnics etc. were well established by the 1960s. There were also geographical areas of

⁴⁹ John D'Emilio, 'Gay Politics and Community in San Francisco Since World War II' in Martin. B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr (eds), *Hidden From History. Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), pp. 456-459.

⁵⁰ D'Emilio, 'Gay Politics and Community in San Francisco Since World War II', pp. 458-459.

⁵¹ D'Emilio, 'Gay Politics and Community in San Francisco Since World War II', pp. 460-461.

the city with an obvious concentration of gay men: Haight, Folsam and the Castro; and for lesbians: Duboce Triangle, Noe Valley and the Upper Mission.⁵² Because of such visibility and organisation, the gay and lesbian communities of San Francisco were a recognised minority group that local politicians courted for votes. By the late 1970s their rights and concerns had become embedded in the city's institutionalised political, social and economic fabric.

San Francisco already had a reputation as the place for radical politics starting with the 'beat' literature and culture of the 1950s and culminating in the flowering of the counter culture and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Civil rights, student and anti-war activism, as well as the rejection of middle class, especially sexual values, and the political analysis of sex roles and patriarchy marked this radicalism. The 1970s also heralded a qualitatively different gay and lesbian politics, that of public disclosure and pride about one's sexuality. 'Coming out' was considered a profound personal and political step to take, necessary to shed the self-hatred and oppression imposed by a homophobic society and essential for gay visibility and building a mass movement.

The Gay Games issue of the *Metra*, a bi weekly magazine published for the gay communities of Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario (Canada) discusses the aura San Francisco had at this time as a very 'out' and brash gay city – an “opulent experience for other US teams, let alone teams from overseas”.⁵³ One of the Detroit delegates at the Games comments that on his team's arrival only a handful was openly 'out', and

⁵² The enormous in-migration of gays and lesbians within the US during the 1970s had created these gay residential areas – some of the first and most obvious the US and the world for that matter. See D'Emilio, 'Gay Politics and Community in San Francisco Since World War II', pp. 467-468.

⁵³ *Metra* Bi Weekly Magazine 'Gay Games Issue' (September 10 1982), p. 24.

that they were scared of the Castro. The newspaper article also states that the sentiments of the Detroit participant are easy to understand, for to be gay in San Francisco in the early 1980s was to be gay unequivocally – “in the store, on the bus, even during the day”. This could be very unnerving to people used to continuously guarding and concealing their sexual identity according to the circumstances.⁵⁴

Another Gay Games I participant, who was attending the University of California – Berkeley, described his first imaginings and experience of the Castro in similar terms:

The first time I went to Castro Street I really had this image that I would be kidnapped off the street and chained in the basement because they were all such wild, wicked, horrible people... Soon I realised it wasn't that way at all... the first time there I had this opportunity to go to a Gay Day Parade, I was really kind of frightened about it, it was when I had only had one boyfriend. The next year I was marching in the parade carrying a sign against Anita Bryant.⁵⁵

The organisers saw the conventional image of the Gay Games that was presented to gays and lesbians from around the Western world as a necessary promotional strategy.

San Francisco was certainly an excellent city to host the first Gay Olympic Games.

There was a large enough gay and lesbian population within the city to supply volunteers and able leaders. Having positive official backing from the San Francisco Mayor's office and friendly cooperation from essential services such as the police was also a bonus for organisers.⁵⁶ During the beginning of the 1980s in most other cities

⁵⁴ *Metra Bi Weekly Magazine*, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Interview with Terry Allison, San Diego December 1996, p. 2.

⁵⁶ The Mayor of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein, designated the nine-day period of the Games as “Gay Olympic Games Week” The city also allowed the use of Kezar Stadium for the opening and closing ceremonies. This stadium had been the home of the 49ers American Football team. The mounted police of San Francisco took part in the official proceedings of the opening ceremony. See the official program of these Games: SFAA, *Gay Athletic Games I*, order of proceeding for the opening ceremony. Also see Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian* (p.148) and an article written by San Francisco supervisor Harry Hart in the *Bay Area Reporter* vol. XII, no. 31 (August 5 1982), p. 7 entitled ‘They’re Still Gay Olympic Games’, for evidence of the degree of support offered by the city and many of its’ political representatives.

within the US, or throughout the world for that matter, such official support and cooperation would have been a rarity.

The 'Exemplary' Gay Olympic Games

Whilst Gay Games I essentially emulated many of the traditions of the 'mainstream' sporting world, its founders also set out to establish a sporting environment that promoted inclusion, participation and doing one's personal best over competition and winning as the primary motivators.⁵⁷ Waddell was critical of professional and Olympic sport. The hyper-commercialisation, politicisation, chauvinistic nationalism, racism, drug taking and winning at all costs ethos that seemed to permeate the modern Olympics were especially problematic. The Gay Olympic Games was to be an 'exemplary' alternative sports festival.

Inclusiveness was a key vision for these Games. This inclusiveness had to encompass the diverse gay and lesbian population in the policies and practices of the Games. Waddell envisaged the Games themselves as an excellent forum for getting together gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, heterosexuals, as well as people of different ages, abilities, socio – economic, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, and political backgrounds. This was to occur in a positive, celebratory atmosphere where they could experience and learn from each other's differences and similarities.⁵⁸ Sport would provide the common focus, and the ceremonies and social events during the week of the Games would also provide opportunities for people to discover and

⁵⁷ Interview recorded with Waddell and Messner published in M. A. Messner and D. F. Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sport* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1994), p. 119 and p. 126.

⁵⁸ Messner and Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sport*, p. 119.

appreciate each other.⁵⁹ Waddell sums up his aspirations for the Games in the following excerpt from an interview conducted by sociologist Michael Messner:

When they (gay people) come to the ghetto, they bring all the prejudices that they learned from the dominant society. We have 'em all there: we're just as racist, and ageist, sexist, nationalistic, and chauvinistic as anybody else. So it seems to me that if a subculture's gonna form, that somehow we've gotta make ourselves exemplary. And how do we do that? Let's use the same process of self-liberation that we learned through coming out to get at other issues. Let's get at the sexism issue. Let's get at the ageism issue. Let's make ourselves an exemplary community.⁶⁰

The Games themselves were structured to accommodate many of these differences. Hence the sports included age-group categories to enable all ages above eighteen to participate. Gender parity was played out in a number of ways. Wherever possible organisational areas of the Games and the sports had male and female co-Chairs, an active women's outreach committee successfully recruited female participants, and there was parity in the sporting events open to men and women.⁶¹

During the 1970s and early 1980s many gay men and lesbians existed in separate worlds. The experience of sexism within gay liberation and heterosexism within the women's movement had prompted many lesbians to formulate a different and more radical analysis of patriarchal oppression.⁶² They also formed separate political organisations and lifestyles that could involve little contact with men. It was a passion of Tom Waddell's and leading women such as Sara Lewinstein to bring together gay men and women and foster greater unity amongst the disparate communities of the gay world. Strong women on the Board of Directors such as Sara Lewinstein, Alita

⁵⁹ Gildersleeve and Wardlaw, 'Gay Olympiad'.

⁶⁰ Messner and Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sports*, p. 119.

⁶¹ Messner and Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sports*, and interview with Sara Lewinstein, San Francisco November 1996.

⁶² D'Emilio, 'Gay Politics and Community', pp. 466-467.

Rosenfeld, Chris Puccinelli, Charlotte Coleman and Hydie Downard emphasised the perspectives of lesbians during meetings and convinced friends and their friends to get involved in the Games. The Women's Outreach Committee sponsored fundraising dances, spaghetti nights and parties. Money raised was used to send committee members to major women's events within the US to spread the word about the Gay Games.⁶³ An outreach committee was also active in recruiting people from minority ethnic and racial groups to participate in the Games.

An official Gay Games I newsletter describes a 'typical' training session of the San Francisco gay track and field team. People are paired up in a stretching exercise – "black woman with white man, Asian woman with white man, white woman with black man" etc. – all working together in a friendly and supportive environment.⁶⁴ They are working for a common purpose – to improve their athletic performances and make the team for the Gay Games. This is noted as unusual because the genders and different races within the gay and lesbian communities do not usually have much to do with each other. Carmen Morrison, a young black woman athlete who tried out for the US Olympic track and field team in 1976, noted the way that men and women had become more sensitive to one another, a two-way learning and appreciation process through interaction and mutual interest. This newsletter presumably served as an example to others training for the Gay Games of what this discovery process is about in practice.

⁶³ John Gildersleeve and Linda Wardlaw, 'Gay Olympiad', *Coming Up!* (August 1982). An official Gay Games I newsletter included in the official Games press kit.

⁶⁴ Messner and Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sports*, p. 119.

Nationalism and chauvinism that often accompanies major sports events was to be muted through a number of strategies. Participants were to represent their cities of origin rather than their country. Waddell wanted to ban the use of national flags during the ceremonies of the Games. Other Board members insisted that these flags would provide colour and a popular symbolism. The flag proponents' argument won out.⁶⁵

However, there were no medal tallies or Games records of athletic feats collected and displayed.⁶⁶ Medal ceremonies, speeches and Games literature emphasised individual effort rather than national success. Waddell captures the philosophy of participation and friendly competition that was continually promoted through speeches and Games literature in the following passage:

You don't win by beating someone else. We defined winning as doing your very best. That way, everyone is a winner...I don't know that it's possible that this kind of attitude will prevail. It's revolutionary. And it's certainly not what the NFL owners or the United States Olympic Committee wants to hear, where winning is essential. So this is not going to be a popular attitude unless we make it a popular attitude.⁶⁷

In effect, the Games organisers sought to recast competition itself

According to this philosophy competition and winning is not about the triumph, the 'domination', the beating of one's opponents and exulting in this victory.

Rather, emphasis is placed on the 'healthy' challenges and self-fulfilment achievable through sport, where one tries to better him/herself and strives to 'realise their full

⁶⁵ Interview with Rosemary Mitchell, San Francisco, November 1996. Mitchell was involved in organising the ceremonies and the gay and lesbian choirs that sang in them during Gay Game I. She was on the Board of Directors and chaired the Fundraising committee during Gay Games II.

⁶⁶ An official results booklet outlining the participants who placed in the top three along with their city's of origin and their event times/distances achieved etc. was published and distributed after the Games. This appears to have been more for the benefit of the participants than as an official record that was carefully documented, to be brought out as the official Games records for subsequent Gay Games. In fact, there still appears to be no official Gay Games records.

⁶⁷ Messner and Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sports*, p. 126.

potential'.⁶⁸ The relationship of competitors becomes one of mutual striving in a friendly atmosphere, the performance of one spurring on and enhancing the other. The secretary of SFAA during Gay Games II, Larry Sheehan, reflected that the Games philosophy which emphasised doing your personal best was also about doing whatever your best sports performance was on the day. Sheehan refrained from using the word competition itself.⁶⁹

Alternative Sports Visions and Influences

A number of developments in California during the 1960s and 1970s provided fertile soil for this more playful and humanistic approach to sport. There was the general rejection of the competitive and bureaucratic values of capitalism made by the New Left and the counter culture, a rejection that extended to sport. Waddell had direct experience of this whilst training during the 1970s with Californian radical sports psychologist, sociologist and therapist, Jack Scott.⁷⁰

Scott wrote one of the first significant critical analyses of modern competitive and bureaucratic sport during the height of counter-cultural rebellion. In *The Athletic Revolution* Scott argues that sport needed to be reclaimed by the athletes and players who are alienated and exploited within the highly competitive and money obsessed professional sports world. The deeper benefits of sport which came from playing for its own sake, that is for enjoyment, self-expression, friendship with other players,

⁶⁸ This is the language of the organisers.

⁶⁹ Interview with Larry Sheehan, San Francisco November 1996. Whilst not directly involved in the organisation of Gay Games I, Sheehan had intimate knowledge of the Gay Games philosophy on competition from the key organisers.

⁷⁰ J. Scott, *The Athletics Revolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1971). Evidence of Tom Waddell's involvement with Scott, see Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 117.

personal growth and excellence, were all thought to be undermined in this capitalist sporting environment.

Another important alternative to traditional sport that originated in California at this time was the New Games Movement. One of the New Games founders, Andrew Fluegelman, states that:

...because our own sports are so highly competitive, we may tend to believe that all human beings, especially males, are born competitors, driven by their genetic nature to the proposition that “winning is the only thing.”⁷¹

According to Fluegelman, many cultures throughout the world do not have such a competitive element in their games, and he presents a whole series of cooperative New Games alternatives. Multicultural, gender neutral and cooperative games were invented so that everyone could play together regardless of gender, age and ability. The rules of the game are also formulated as the game takes place to suit the specific interests and needs of players. The players themselves also enforce rules derived democratically in a friendly manner. The New Games Movement went further than Scott in actually questioning the traditionally masculine basis of mainstream competitive sport, and in its radical inclusion of participants through new rules, practices and processes. This culture of challenge to traditional values in sport, especially those espoused by Scott, may have rubbed off on the organisers of the first Gay Games and in particular, Waddell.

⁷¹ A. Fluegelman, *The New Games Book* (New York: Headland Press, 1976), p. 9.

The Promotion of Health and Fitness During the 1970s and 1980s.

By the 1970s there were numerous out-door recreational sports popularly taken up for the benefits of health, fitness and self-enhancement – rather than for competition and character building. These included jogging, bushwalking, sailboarding, water skiing, recreational cycling and surfing. Indoor fitness activities such as weight training, body building, exercise to music classes and lap swimming were popularised in the late 1970s. Mass participatory sports events such as fun runs and latter, triathlons, biathlons and swim classics, also took off during this decade. Once again, California was a world leader in this health and fitness boom.

Gay men in particular cultivated the body beautiful in gymnasiums, out jogging or in the pool.⁷² Mike Hippler, of the *BAR*, discusses the phenomenon of the gay owned and frequented gymnasium in San Francisco during the time of the first Gay Games. He also describes the popularity of ‘pumping iron’, taking exercise to music classes and generally staying fit and looking good amongst many gay men in this city. For Hippler, along with a military haircut, a moustache, and a closet full of Levi 501s, a gym membership has become nearly a requisite part of a Gay He suggests that lesbians were also showing a keen interest in keeping fit. There appears to have been some women’s gyms within San Francisco during the early 1980s. Women also

⁷² Mike Hippler, ‘Gay Gyms in the City’, *BAR*, vol.XII, no.52 (Dec 30 1982). Hippler discusses the phenomenon and popularity of the gay gym in San Francisco.

⁷³ Hippler, ‘ Gay Gyms in the City’, p. 16.

appear to have been training for the sport of powerlifting in the lead up to Gay Games I.⁷⁴

The rise of this health consciousness was also a result of increased concern for the afflictions of sedentary and affluent lifestyles such as cardiovascular disease and obesity. A number of epidemiological studies indicated the benefits of regular aerobic exercise in lowering the risks and effects of these conditions.⁷⁵ Self-help books extolling the virtues of aerobic exercise were published, and governments launched health promotion campaigns that attempted to persuade people to get active.⁷⁶

Aligned with this health promotion was an increasing emphasis on the cultivation of the 'body beautiful' and the fear of ageing. Weight-loss programs, weight training routines, body building and exercise to music classes were especially popular in their promise of youthful beauty and their confirmation of self-worth and attractiveness to others. This boom in new recreational pursuits and the cultivation of the body is generated by the consumer economy of late capitalism – always colonising new markets – even in areas that originated as alternatives to competitive capitalist sport and recreation.⁷⁷ When seen in this overall context, the first Gay Games can be seen as a mass participatory multi sports event that de-emphasises competition and re-affirms personal development.

⁷⁴ Sandi Ripson, 'Women's Powerlifting On the Rise', *BAR*, vol. XII, no. 30 (July 30, 1982), p. 18.

⁷⁵ B.Hetzel and T. McMichael, *The LS Factor-Lifestyle and Health* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1987), p. 76 and p. 190.

⁷⁶ Kenneth Cooper, *Aerobics* (New York: Bantam, 1971) and James Fix, *The Complete Book of Running* (New York: Random House, 1977) were two of the most famous books on the benefits of aerobic exercise published from the US and having enormous world wide appeal.

⁷⁷ Mike Featherstone, 'The Body in Consumer Culture' *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1983), pp.18-33.

There were a number of factors operating at the Games to enhance the spirit of friendship in competition and reduce the winning is everything mentality. First and foremost, there was a palpable atmosphere of excitement, camaraderie and goodwill at these Games.⁷⁸ This was the first time that gay and lesbian athletes had come together from all over the US and parts of the world in such an open and affirming way. For people used to concealing a central aspect of their identity in much of life and in sport for fear of stigma, discrimination, ridicule and even violence, the Gay Games atmosphere would have provided quite a contrast. Here they were being celebrated for their sexual identity and encouraged in their athletic endeavours, not for their ability to prove national superiority.

Tensions and Contradictions Within the Gay Games Philosophy and Mainstreaming

In spite of the success at promoting inclusion, participation and personal best, there were some noticeable contradictions with this Gay Games philosophy, especially with respect to mainstreaming the image of gays and lesbians as 'normal.' Firstly, there appears to have been a hierarchy of acceptability. For example, gay men and lesbians who adhered to conventional gender norms presented the appropriate Gay Games image. Lesbians appear to have been given more leeway than gay men in this area as the strong, butch lesbian who excelled in sports such as rugby and weightlifting were included in the Games. Boxing was also scheduled, however, due to there being no male competitors and only a few females, the sport was cancelled.

⁷⁸ Interviews with Gene Dermody, Paul Mart, Rosemary Mitchell, Terry Allison, Linda McKnight and Charles Carson confirm this atmosphere of excitement. All except Mart were primarily participants at Gay Games I.

However, 'limp wristed', camp and queenie gay men were not as acceptable.

Ironically, the most popular gay male style that had originated in the Castro during the late seventies was super-macho – more masculine in appearance than heterosexual men.⁷⁹ The style involved the display of muscles, clad in leather or denim, or the 'gay clone' look of short hair, moustache, check shirt, workboots and denim jeans.⁸⁰ Gay men eroticised traditional masculinity, emulating and desiring it in one another.

Some have argued that the super-macho style is a form of camp that exposes the absurdity of masculinity.⁸¹ The more radical questioning of gender within gay liberation and feminism of the 1970s exposed hegemonic masculinity at a deeper level of practice than the eroticisation of this hyper-masculinity amongst gay men. This style is obvious in the photographs of gay men competing at the Gay Games. As has already been mentioned, men in drag, as well as gays and lesbians into leather and sado-masochism did not have a place at these Gay Games. Neither did gay and lesbian radicals. Conventional athletic attire and team uniforms were required at official Gay Games sports events and Games functions. In this sense, there was a correct and an incorrect way to conduct oneself in sport and perhaps more tellingly to present oneself to the world at an event such as the Gay Games.

For a population that has throughout the twentieth century been marginalised, stigmatised and harassed, the action of marginalising and excluding members of its own community is problematic. Some boundaries and limits are usually set on who is

⁷⁹ Dennis Altman, *The Homosexualisation of America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p. 1.

⁸⁰ Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion. Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virago, 1990),

p. 149.

⁸¹ Segal, *Slow Motion*, p. 149.

to be included within a community. People who do not share the spirit of inclusion, and seek to cause harm to others may need to be excluded. Whilst the Gay Games organisers' desire to counter negative stereotypes was understandable, it produced some unsavoury consequences of its own, especially for an event that was billed as a positive celebration of sexual identity, friendships and abilities in sport. In a critique of the Games organisers' efforts to prove that gay people are just like straight people (and by association are normal) Tom Plageman writes the following in San Francisco's leading gay newspaper:

I'm as painfully aware as any of us that homophobic stereotypes are not what we're all about. But I am equally and emphatically aware that we are not "just like everybody else". Our different-ness is one of the best parts of being Gay.⁸²

Plageman was concerned that the different and unique aspects of being gay and of gay culture were being denied and erased by the Games organisers.

Sports Program and the Sanctioning Issue

Sixteen sports were organised for the first Gay Games including basketball, billiards, bowling, cycling, diving, golf, marathon, physique, powerlifting, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball and wrestling.⁸³ Waddell encouraged as many sports as possible to gain official sanctioning from their respective 'mainstream' official sports organisations.⁸⁴ Sanctioning required adopting the official rules of the sport and the using of qualified and approved sports officials.⁸⁵

Sanctioning was considered vital because it gave legitimacy to the sport. Gay Games

⁸² Tom Plageman, 'De-Gaying The Gay Games', *BAR*, vol. XII, no. 37 (Sept 16 1982), pp. 7-8.

⁸³ SFAA, *Gay Athletic Games*. Official Program of Gay Games I.

⁸⁴ Interview with Dermody. Dermody participated in wrestling at all of the Gay Games. He has also been a Director on Board of FGG. Some sports failed to gain sanctioning.

⁸⁵ Interview with Dermody.

participants could be assured that their sport was properly organised and it was hoped that the media would take this gay sports event seriously.⁸⁶ Sanctioning only occurred at the local sports level at these Games, and many of the sports appear to have been solely managed and run by volunteers from within the gay and lesbian community.⁸⁷

Sanctioning of sports at the Gay Games can pose problems in terms of access and equity. For one, it presents a number of eligibility requirements that potential participants may be unwilling or unable to meet. For instance, at a fully sanctioned Masters swimming event, competitors must be officially registered and paid up members of a recognised Masters swimming club. The Gay Games swimming competition has had full official sanctioning from the national and international overseeing swimming body since 1990.⁸⁸ Masters swimming, in turn, is governed by the rules and procedures of the international swimming body – the Federation Internationale Natation Association (FINA). The world masters sports movement appears to have been in its initial stages of organisation by the first Gay Games.⁸⁹ While the policy of sanctioning originated with the first Gay Games, it wasn't until the 1990s that the issue of sanctioning really made it more difficult for recreational competitors who had little experience or formal connection with a sport to enter this sport in the Gay Games.^{90 91 92}

⁸⁶ Interview with Dermody.

⁸⁷ Hal Herkenhoff, *Sports Directors Report, Gay Games II, San Francisco* (August 9-17 1986), p. 11. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series II, Gay Games II folder 3.

⁸⁸ The Canadian Masters Swimming Association and the international swimming body – Federation Internationale Natation Association (FINA) – sanctioned the Gay Games III swimming competition. Gay Games I and II were officiated events and the local swimming bodies oversaw the swim competitions.

⁸⁹ The first World Masters Games was held in 1985 in Toronto, Canada.

⁹⁰ To compete at Gay Games IV in New York, a number of lesbians from Melbourne, Australia had to form their own Masters swimming club, pay the rather expensive registration fee and attend certain Masters meetings to fulfil the requirements of a bona fide club. They did this because there were no friendly lesbian swim clubs in Melbourne at the time. On top of this they had to pay the Gay

Sanctioning does have other merits. By requiring competitors to belong to an official sports club or body, they are exposed to current principles of training and event preparation. This, in turn, can safeguard the well being of the participant when participating in the Gay Games. The sanctioning exercise itself brings together mainstream sports officials and members of the gay and lesbian communities in ways that may not otherwise happen, which may go some way toward better understanding between the groups.

While not directly related to sanctioning, another policy effecting participation had to do with the limit of only one competitor from a participating city per individual event. This meant that within large city sports teams, where there were a number of people wanting to enter the same event, selection trials for these events had to take place. As a result, Terry Allison, for example, could not enter his favourite swimming event because another team member from his home city was faster than him.⁹³ Interestingly, organisers advised participants who were not good enough to gain selection for their event to claim that they were from another city – all they needed was a residential address in this city.⁹⁴

Games registration fee and all the other expenses involved in attending an overseas Games. Hence, participating at these Games was not a straightforward or inexpensive affair. Based on my own knowledge as a Masters swimmer in Melbourne.

⁹¹ The issue of sanctioning and inclusiveness is still debated within the FGG. Interview with Roz Quarto, New York, December 1996. Quarto was the Operations manager of Gay Games IV and co-President of FGG from 1997-1999.

⁹² By Gay Games VI, held in Sydney in 2002, the FGG had developed an elaborate *Red Book* of official Gay Games sports rules and requirements. It was mandatory for many of the sports at the Games to be organised and run strictly according to international and/or national 'mainstream' sport rules and sanctioning requirements.

⁹³ Interview with Allison. Allison swam for Berkeley, CA at the 1982 Gay Games.

⁹⁴ Hence, the number of US cities listed on the official program was inflated.

The reasons for this particular ruling are unclear but could relate to facility and budgetary constraints and/or the objective of filling events with the best performers for promotional benefits. In either case, both sanctioning and the one competitor per event rule were not particularly encouraging conditions for gays and lesbians wanting to try out an individual sport within a competitive context for the first time.

Despite these contradictions and shortcomings, the commitment of Gay Games organisers to the staging of a multi-sport event that was based on principles and practices of friendly and mutually enhancing competition, mass participation and the elimination of discrimination and prejudice within the gay and lesbian community was admirable. Few sports events could boast as broad and ambitious a vision of social justice – one that aimed to transform the practice community as well as the wider, largely homophobic, world. The Gay Games was the first event to bring gays and lesbians together from across the globe. It was also one of the first mass participatory multi-sport events for adults of all sexual orientations, genders, and races, abilities that worked on a global scale.⁹⁵

Gay Games I Participants and Atmosphere

These first Gay Games generated a great deal of excitement within the gay and lesbian community of San Francisco, and participants in general reported feelings of

⁹⁵ Heterosexual competitors, supporters, volunteers and officials were also welcomed to these Games. It is impossible to know how many actually did attend, although it could be assumed that the numbers were low. This is hard to gauge as no data was recorded and stored that may have given some indication of the number of heterosexual people attending any of the Gay Games. The only way such information could be collected is via a question on the registration form pertaining to the person's sexual orientation. In all probability few heterosexual competitors, supporters or volunteers were involved with this Games. Due to fear of stigma and prejudice it appears to have been difficult enough for gays and lesbians to attend these Games.

enjoyment, achievement, and community belonging. Such camaraderie and goodwill was related to the widespread feeling amongst participants that this was a significant event for gays and lesbians.⁹⁶ It was the first time that they had been brought together from around the world. The 1,350 participants of Gay Games I came from eleven nations including Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, France, Ireland, New Zealand, West Germany, Israel and the US.⁹⁷ Over 170 cities of the US were also represented, with the majority coming from California.⁹⁸

For many, this was the first major multi-sport event that they had participated in. Considering the Masters Sport Movement had yet to stage a World Games, they were pioneers in their involvement at a mass participatory multi-sport event open to all adult ages.⁹⁹ The participation in the ceremonies and events similar to other prestigious elite world sports events like the Olympic Games also made participants feel special. Journalist Carl Carlson describes the atmosphere of the opening ceremony thus:

When the teams entered the stadium the crowd was swept with the startling realisation of the event. It was the first time in history that gays and lesbians had been in one place from around the world. Leading the march onto the field, the Australian team, resplendent in their dark green and yellow uniforms, marched proudly around the track, displaying a huge Australian flag. As one hardy and seasoned reporter was heard to blurt out ... it's a mental enema.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Interviews with Gene Dermody, Paul Mart, Rosemary Mitchell, Terry Allison, Linda McKnight and Charles Carson confirm this atmosphere of excitement. All except Paul were primarily participants at Gay Games I.

⁹⁷ SFPL: GGA, *Gay Athletic Games*, Official Program, front cover. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box.1, Series 1, folder I, 1982.

⁹⁸ SFAA, *Gay Athletics Games*, Official Program, pp. 42-43.

⁹⁹ Masters sport started in the US in the 1970s in sports such as swimming and track and field

¹⁰⁰ Carl Carlson, 'Column' *The Voice*, San Francisco (Gay Press) vol. 4. no.18 (Sept 10 1982).

Another reporter summed up the Games friendly and supportive atmosphere with different emphases:

The commercial, nationalistic, competitiveness of the major Olympics was nowhere evident. In its place was a supportive, loving atmosphere in which the athletes were encouraged to do their personal best for self-fulfilment. The result was phenomenal. Participants coached and applauded each other even while competing in the same event... Many of the non-gay referees and umpires were overwhelmed and remarked on the outpouring of encouragement and affection offered by athletes and fans.¹⁰¹

A friendly, supportive and inclusive atmosphere was evident during the first Gay Games.

Organisation

Behind the scenes organisation for the Games had been quite chaotic and hectic.

Everything had to be built from scratch including the organisational structure, the program, administration and operations. Most Gay Games organisers – all of whom were volunteers – had little experience with the complexities of a multi-sports event of international dimensions.¹⁰² The final Games budget of \$387,000 appears to have broken even. The organising committee consisted largely of professionals and small business owners, including doctors, lawyers, accountants, advertisers, graphic designers, event managers and promoters, managers in hospitality and the like.¹⁰³

Members worked on particular sub-committees and work areas, the main ones being – sport, housing, legal, communications, fundraising, medical services, facilities,

¹⁰¹ Ernie Potvin, 'Gays Renew Olympic Spirit: Athletic as 'Personal Best', *Update*. Southern California's Gay Newspaper, p. 1 and 12.

¹⁰² Coe, *A Sense of Pride*: p. 9.

¹⁰³ Evident from interviews and conversations with Sara Lewinstein, Rosemary Mitchell, Shawn Kelly and Larry Sheehan. All interviews were conducted in San Francisco in November of 1996. The background of many on the first Board of SFAA is also discussed in Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*

ticketing, publicity and public relations, program, ceremonies, women's outreach, outreach and volunteers.¹⁰⁴

Outreach concentrated on promoting the Gay Olympic Games to lesbians and 'third world peoples' locally and within the US and to gay and lesbian communities within some of the main Western cities of the world.¹⁰⁵ These promotional efforts appear to have started in the beginning of 1982, giving very little lead-time for target groups to get organised.

All event management areas required volunteers, especially for the day to day staffing of the Games office in the main gay area of San Francisco - the Castro - in its lead up, during athlete registration, and in the provision of information during the Games. A total of 1,000 volunteers worked frantically during the Games week itself. Volunteers at Games headquarters were flat out answering phones, selling tickets to daily events, posting sports notices and results and helping with accommodation arrangements. The local gay and lesbian community opened their houses to overseas and interstate participants in a hosted housing scheme.¹⁰⁶ A transportation system designed to take participants to and from the airport, as well as ferry them around to all of the main event facilities, was reported to have worked efficiently. Effective too was the medical team of half a dozen doctors and several nurses who were on duty at the various sports venues.

¹⁰⁴ Listed in the official program of Gay Games I: *Gay Athletic Games I*.

¹⁰⁵ 'Third world peoples' was the term used for ethnic and racial minorities within the US at this time.

¹⁰⁶ SFAA, *San Francisco Arts and Athletics Presents the Gay Athletics Games and Cultural Week*, SFPL, GGA, Box 1, Series 1, folder 1, 1982. This document outlines the initial concept of Gay Games I, the sports to be staged, entry procedures, hosting arrangements, when and where the Games will take place, rules of conduct and uniforms, medal ceremonies and the cultural week of the Games.

The Gay Games, which started off as a relatively small, mostly locally attended affair, quickly and effectively organised multi-sports event that established a template for future Games. They also contributed to a wave of gay and lesbian sports organising within the US and in other Western cities with significant gay and lesbian communities.¹⁰⁷

Challenges to Staging the Gay Olympic Games

Immigration

There were a number of major difficulties and obstacles Games organisers had to contend with that other sports events would never experience. These difficulties are considered endemic where there exists societal prejudice on the basis of homosexuality. The first of these difficulties was the need to inform and reassure gay and lesbian participants coming into the US that they could do so as long as they were careful not to bring their sexual orientation to the attention of the immigration authorities. Up until June 1981 it was routine for officials to ask visitors at the US border about their personal and sexual lives, with the aim of identifying and excluding gays and lesbians.¹⁰⁸ Possibly thousands had been denied entry into the US under this anti-Gay immigration law.

In 1979, British activist Carl Hill took on the law, wearing a Gay Pride button as he proceeded through customs at San Francisco airport. After being denied entry, he

¹⁰⁷ Coe, *Sense of Pride*, p. 9. Brenda Pitts, 'Beyond the Bars: The Development of Leisure-Activity Management in the Lesbian and Gay Population in America', *Leisure International Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 3 (1988), p.5. A sports festival was organised in Vancouver for its gay and lesbian community following these Games and some of the organisers put in a bid to stage a Gay Games during the lead up to Gay Games II.

¹⁰⁸ *Gay Athletics Games I* (Official program), p. 34.

gained the help of gay rights advocates and fought a three-year legal battle to gain a result in 1981 of being admitted to the US as a “visitor for pleasure”.¹⁰⁹ During 1981 Mary Dunlap and the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Committee filed for an injunction against the enforcement of this law, arguing that it violated the First Amendment rights of US citizens to associate and exchange information. A national injunction was granted in July of 1982 just before Gay Games I. Federal District Judge Robert P. Aguilar ruled that the primary effect of this law was to “restrict the flow of ideas about human rights”.¹¹⁰

In spite of these rulings, organisers still feared that gays and lesbians from outside of the US would be deterred from attending an event as obvious as the Gay Games. In response they provided immigration information in their promotional and registration materials that advised visitors to be as discrete as possible about their sexual orientation when coming into the country.

Organisational Problems

There were a number of organisational problems ‘ of questionable origin’ that Games managers had to sort out just a week prior to the Opening Ceremony.¹¹¹ These included the disconnection of the Gay Games office phones and the slowness of the telephone company in responding to the many complaints lodged by Games officials. In another case, San Francisco State University apparently reneged on their contract for pool hire just four days before the swimming competition was scheduled. The University’s wrestling mats, which had also been booked for Games use, were also no

¹⁰⁹ *Gay Athletics Games I*, p. 34.

¹¹⁰ *Gay Athletics Games I*, p. 34.

¹¹¹ Potvin, ‘ Gays Renew Olympic Spirit’, p. 12. Potvin discusses all of these minor organisational problems.

longer available. In yet another case, San Francisco City College suddenly arranged the re-surfacing of their volleyball courts during the time in which the Games volleyball tournament was to take place. Games organisers lobbied City Hall, and these problems were rectified. However, they appear to have added an extra dimension of complication to the staging of Gay Games I. These were minor compared to the legal battle SFAA had to mount against the USOC over the use of the word 'Olympics'.

Legal Battle With USOC

As chairman of S.F.A.A. Waddell had written to the USOC asking for permission to use the term 'Olympics'. In this letter he outlined the nature of the Games stressing the goal of exploding damaging stereotypes for gay people around the world:

...Our outreach and emphasis differs widely from the traditional Olympic Games in that we, openly gay people around the world, are struggling to produce an image that more closely resembles the facts rather than some libidinous stereotype generated over decades of misunderstanding and intolerance... We feel strongly that the term "Olympics" is integral to what we intend to achieve. Our eight days of cultural events and sport will be a testament to our wholesomeness.¹¹²

Waddell also pointed out in this letter that there were a number of events within the US that used Olympics in their title including: "Armchair Olympics", "Special Olympics", "Handicapped Olympics", "Police Olympics", even "Dog Olympics".¹¹³ A number of other less reputable examples could have been given – "Xerox Olympics", "Diaper Olympics", "Rat Olympics", and "Crab Cooking Olympics" for example.¹¹⁴ Permission from the USOC had to be sought according to the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, which granted this powerful sporting body exclusive use of the

¹¹² Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 150-151.

¹¹³ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 151.

¹¹⁴ Waddell made reference to these events in a follow up letter to Col. Miller.

word 'Olympic' in the US. Colonel F. Don Miller, the Executive Director of the USOC, responded by demanding that SFAA stop using the word and threatened to recover any income made from using "Olympic terminology".¹¹⁵

After SFAA decided to continue using 'Olympics' in Games materials, Tom Waddell wrote again to Miller accusing the USOC of being discriminatory.¹¹⁶ The USOC responded on August 9 1982 with a court action and a temporary restraining order prohibiting the use of the word 'Olympics' by SFAA. This was just two weeks before the first Gay Games were to start. USOC's attorney, Vaughan Walker, of the law firm Pillsbury, Madison and Sutro, was asked by the press why the Police Olympics and the Armenian Olympics had been left alone but the Gay Olympics had been taken to court. His response was: "They are not a suitable group". He argued in court that the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles could not go forward as was planned if these Games were termed the Gay Olympics because the public would be confused and the \$40,000,000 budget of the official Olympics could be jeopardised.

The use of 'Gay' in front of Olympics seemed to be of particular concern for the plaintiffs.¹¹⁷ This was the first legal action taken by the USOC even though many other organisations had used this term without permission. *Sports Illustrated* ran an article in the 16 August 1982 US edition quoting International Olympic Committee Director, Monique Berlioux:

¹¹⁵ Roy Coe, *A Sense of Pride*. p. 9.

¹¹⁶ In relation to all the other events that had used the term 'Olympics'.

¹¹⁷ Richard Primavera, *Press Release: SFAA, 'Gay Games Determined to Appeal Federal District Court Decision'* (Saturday August 21 1982). Archived in SFPL, GGA, Box 1, Series 1, Gay Games I folder 1.

The US Congress has no right to give away something that belongs to the IOC, least of all the Olympic emblem, which Baron Coubertin, the founder of the modern games, bestowed on the IOC and nobody else.

The article pointed out the hypocrisy of the USOC considering this complaint by the IOC of the former's illegitimate use of Olympic symbols. *Sports Illustrated* also pointed out that the society in which the ancient Olympics was founded was one in which homosexuality amongst men flourished. It quoted Waddell: "The bottom line is that if I'm a rat, a crab, a copying machine or an Armenian I can have my own Olympics. If I'm gay, I can't".

This court action was more than hypocritical and discriminatory – it cost the Gay Games \$15,000 and hundreds of volunteer labour hours to remove the offending word from all the Games posters, pins, T-shirts, programs, banners, flags, information and fund-raising mementos. Many of these mementos could not be sold and there was no time to produce new items.¹¹⁸ Games organisers and San Francisco City dignitaries responded with dignity and humour. The Games briefly received a new title – the Gay bleep Games. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution expressing their support for the Gay Olympics as "consistent with the highest principles of the Olympic tradition". It also affirmed the use of the term 'Olympics'.¹¹⁹ This affirmation was carried into the speeches of dignitaries during the official ceremonies of the Games. The collective sense of being unjustly treated certainly galvanised the gay and lesbian community. The international press suddenly became interested in the Games. Without this legal drama all except the local and international gay press probably would have largely ignored them.

¹¹⁸ Coe, *A Sense of Pride*: pp. 9-11.

¹¹⁹ Supervisor Harry Britt, 'They're Still Gay Olympic Games', *BAR*, vol. XII, no. 31 (August 5 1982).

However, emotional, legal and organisational costs for SFAA, and especially for Waddell, far outweighed these more positive responses. The USOC filed a legal suit in May of 1984 to recover the legal fees of \$96,600. The presiding Judge John Vukasin, ruled in favour of this financial arrangement, not even allowing an oral hearing from SFAA representing attorney Mary Dunlap.¹²⁰ To collect this money a lien was placed on co-defendant Waddell's house. This lien was eventually removed at the time of his funeral in 1987 – Tom having lived with and died of HIV/AIDS during the period of this legal trauma. Waddell speaks of suffering a significant degree of anxiety and concern over this battle.¹²¹ Others close to the case were also affected.¹²²

This David and Goliath legal battle had significant implications for the Gay Games and for sport and commerce in the US. It was the first case in which the USOC had flexed its legal and financial muscle to protect its monopoly on the use of Olympic terminology and symbols within the US. The case created some important legal precedents in this area – having gone through most layers of the legal system within the US including the Federal Court, the US Court of Appeals and the US Supreme Court.

The judges of the Appeals Court handed down their decision in February of 1986, indicating that Olympics could not be used in the title of Gay Games II. This legal

¹²⁰ Coe, *A Sense of Pride*, pp. 9-11.

¹²¹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, see especially p. 183 and pp. 220- 221.

¹²² Interview with Larry Sheehan, secretary of the Board of Directors, Gay Games II and assisting attorney. Larry indicated that the legal dispute both galvanised and demoralised those fighting the cause directly.

saga continued throughout Gay Games II, involving the time, effort and emotions of key SFAA Board members and legal advisors Mary Dunlap asked this court to hear the case “en blanc” – with all judges. Whilst the result was the same there was a strong dissenting voice from one of the conservative judges – Alex Kozinski. He considered that the power of Congress to grant a crown monopoly on the use of the word ‘Olympic’ set a precedent that could potentially infringe on personal liberties. He succinctly summed this up for the gay and lesbian community – “It seems that the USOC is using its control over the term “Olympic” to promote the very image of homosexuality that SFAA seeks to combat”. Control over the use of symbols and language is certainly a powerful thing. The Supreme Court of the United States made the final decision on this matter on June 25, 1987. By the narrowest of margins – five justices to four – the right of the USOC to the exclusive use of ‘Olympic’ was upheld. The Gay Games could definitely not use this sacred term in its title. Neither could Greek restaurants, bus companies, fund-raising campaigns and sports events after these court decisions.¹²³

The Gay Games as an Alternative Games

While the Gay Games emulated some of the goals and symbolism of the Olympic Games, there were also significant differences. The Gay Games was envisaged as a ‘peoples games’ open to anyone wishing to participate. It was not to be a testing ground for the elite of all gay and lesbian athletes worldwide. The Gay Games had much more in common with other world mass participatory games, in particular the

¹²³ The USOC tried to eliminate the use of ‘Olympics’ from all sorts of companies and areas after this court victory. For instance, a Greek restaurant in Philadelphia with Olympic in its title had to change its name. So did a New Jersey Bus company named Olympic Trails. The fund raising event to promote reading for children – the Reading Olympics was also renamed. See Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, pp.173-174.

World Masters Games (WMG) of the 1980s. In fact, masters, or veteran's sport as it was known within the US, and the WMG, developed at the same time as gay sport leagues and the Gay Games.

World Masters Games

Masters sports leagues and clubs took off in the late 1970s within many Western nations, and there were established masters athletics, tennis and swimming organisations and competitions by 1980. The first WMG was held in 1985 in Toronto, Canada, and the governing body of these Games, The International World Masters Games Association (IMGA) was founded in 1995 in Seoul, Korea.¹²⁴ The professed aim of masters sport was to promote healthy physical activity in a friendly, supportive and enjoyable atmosphere for people over thirty (twenty-five for swimming). Like the Gay Games, participation and doing one's personal best is emphasised, and there are no qualifying requirements. Participants represent themselves and there are no national teams.¹²⁵ Masters swimming in Australia has the motto – friendship, fitness and fun. Events in swimming are often organised according to a swimmer's ability, rather than his or her age or sex. Hence, women and men of varying ages will be swimming in the same race, the common denominator being the time that they have nominated to complete the distance. Masters tennis is also commonly organised on ability rather than sex or age and there are numerous mixed teams, playoffs and doubles scheduled.

¹²⁴ IMGA, *Guidelines and Conditions For Hosting a World Masters Games* (Brøndby, Denmark: 2000).

¹²⁵ IMGA, *Guidelines and Conditions*, p. 4.

Masters sport within the US may be seen as pre-cursor to the Gay Games as it appears that many of the gay sports teams that formed and played during the 1970s were members of masters leagues. The Gay Games used masters' sports rules and organisation in many of its sports competitions. However, the Gay Games as an international mass participatory multi-sports event did precede the WMG by three years, and its promotion of inclusiveness was more explicit and pro-active.

Equity and inclusiveness within the Gay Games

It is useful to see the inclusive philosophy of the Gay Games within a liberal civil and minority rights context of the 1970s and 1980s. Giving a brief and succinct account of this approach, prejudice can be reduced or eradicated through good leadership, fair laws, face to face contact with the members of the group that have been dehumanised, and through enlightened education. Providing equal opportunity within the current traditions of sport has been the primary liberal strategy to enable gender equity.

Hence, in Gay Games I, the program of sports events was practically the same for men and women. Linked systems of discrimination and oppression involving relations of power are often missing from such liberal analyses. The status quo – in this case mainstream sport – is largely seen as desirable and, with minor alteration, worth emulating.

Feminist Perspectives on Sport

Feminist approaches to sport have critiqued relations of power within society and sport based on gender and sexuality discrimination and oppression. Considering that it is primarily this kind of oppression that has had an impact on the communities

involved in the Gay Games, and given the influence of the women's movement and feminism on lesbians during the 1970s and early 1980s it is important to briefly look at feminist approaches to sport at this time.¹²⁶ Did these approaches influence the leaders and visionaries of the first Gay Games and were the Games transformative in relation to gender, sexuality and sports policy and practice?

Feminist sociologists began to look at sport during the 1970s, although their initial work concentrated on unmasking discriminatory practices disadvantaging sportswomen, and formulating strategies to equalise opportunities with sportsmen.¹²⁷ This liberal equality of opportunity approach is essentially concerned with getting for women more of what men already have.

It was not until the 1980s that sports feminists developed more sophisticated theoretical approaches to the understanding of gender, sexuality and sport. Sports feminists essentially believe that sports can provide women with enriching experiences of their physicality, including improved embodied strength and confidence, sensuous expression, as well as opportunities to connect with others and to gain enjoyment and fulfilment. Numerous feminists and pro-feminists called for

¹²⁶ This section provides only a basic outline of the main feminist approaches to sport during the 1970s and 1980s. Its purpose is principally to historically situate Gay Games I and the leading women of this Gay Games, within the directions of sport feminist thought and practice of this time. Feminist interventions and policy initiatives in sport are also briefly discussed on pp. 94-95 of the thesis. See Jennifer Hargreaves important book on women and sport for more in-depth coverage of feminism and sport: *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport* (London: Routledge, 1994)

¹²⁷ Some of the main examples of this approach are: Ken Dyer, *Catching Up the Men: Women in Sport* (London: Junction Books, 1982); E. Gerber, J Felshin., P Berlin and W Wyrick., *The American Woman in Sport* (Reading ,Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1974); C. Klafs and M. Lyon, *The Female Athlete: Conditioning, Competition and Culture* (St Louis: C.V. Mosby, 1978). Equal Opportunity legislation, especially Title IX in the U.S.A (1974) are examples par excellence of this liberal approach. This is still the main strategy used to improve women's opportunities in sport within most developed countries of the world.

traditional sports to be re-visioned to eliminate their violent, aggressive, hyper-competitive and body damaging aspects, and to make them more humane and enriching for men as well as women. Three main approaches have evolved within North America, Europe and Australia - a liberal feminist perspective, a separatist all-female strategy and “a co-operative venture with men for qualitatively new models in which differences between the sexes would be unimportant”.¹²⁸

Lesbian feminists who have been involved in sport have opted for the second approach. Since the early 1980s there have been lesbian sporting leagues organised on feminist principles including: the provision of safe, secure and supportive environments for all participants; the active encouragement of all ability levels; concentration on the enjoyable and successful accomplishments of players rather than the failures, avoidance of situations that lead to unequal relations; fostering of cooperation within the team and club; providing women with decision making opportunities especially concerning their participation; and promoting a shared and inclusive approach to decisions making. As Lenskyj points out, this expressive, process oriented way of organising sporting practices has the potential “for woman-centred sporting practices to include the celebration of female physicality and sexuality”.¹²⁹ Biology is not the cause of the cooperative ethos here; rather it is the deliberate efforts of sportswomen to change sports so as to reflect their lives and what is important to them.

¹²⁸ Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 40.

¹²⁹ Helen, J, Lenskyj, 'Sexuality and Femininity in Sport Contexts: Issues and Alternatives'. In *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (November 1994), p. 364.

Lesbian and Feminist Shaping of Gay Games I

Lesbians involved in key organising positions for the first Gay Games do not appear to have re-visioned their sporting practices in this separatist way. Their critical concerns were ensuring that there was some sort of gender parity in organisational positions, in the number of participants attending the Games, and in the sporting events open to women. One of the most influential female leaders of these early Gay Games, Sara Lewinstein, had a conventional view of sport.¹³⁰ Lewinstein had competed as a professional bowler and had played in and organised women's softball teams within the San Francisco area. Sport for her was about enjoyment, friendship, community and achievement.

Furthermore, she considered sports as wholesome pursuits because they were good for your health, they provided great opportunities for challenge, achievement and recognition, and they brought people together. Sport could be improved through equal opportunities for girls and women and the elimination of homophobia. Lewinstein also thought the way women were treated in the sporting world was unjust – professional sportswomen earn less money than the men. She thought that this was partly explicable because men were by nature better at sport. Lewinstein considered these 'natural differences' precluded women from competing with men even in sports that did not emphasise strength or power – for instance ten pin bowling and billiards.

¹³⁰ From interview and conversations with Sara Lewinstein during November 1996, at the Federation of Gay Games meetings in Sydney 1996, Denver 1997 and at the Gay Games in Amsterdam in 1998.

Like many other keen sportspeople, Lewinstein did not envision different ways of organising sports to enable men and women to play together, or different ways of appreciating sports so that attributes that women tended to excel at such as agility, grace and endurance, were given greater recognition. There were strong social traditions that maintained single sex team sports, the strongest for lesbians being the camaraderie and love amongst women. Team sports such as softball and basketball had been some of the main places where lesbians met each other. They provided a sense of community and support and were often the source of significant friendships, sexual and love relationships as well as sporting enjoyment. The involvement of men would change this environment.

However, Lewinstein, like most of her lesbian friends on the organising team of the first Gay Games, was a strong advocate for bringing gay men and lesbians together through an event such as the Gay Games. In this Lewinstein's feminism aligned more strongly with the liberal feminism of this period rather than radical/or separatist feminism. Whilst Lewinstein did not speak for all lesbians involved in the shaping of the first Gay Games, she was representative of the way many sporting lesbians viewed their sports.

Non-traditional sports for women such as rugby, boxing and powerlifting were included in the initial Games' program. These sports were attractive to lesbians who enjoyed the experience of developing muscular, strong, hard and forceful bodies, as well as the use of this powerful embodiment especially in boxing and rugby, in artful, aggressive and even violent ways. Rugby and boxing require fitness, strength and specific sporting finesse. They are also sports in which the body is used primarily as a

weapon against other players. The inclusion of these more aggressive and traditionally masculine sports (rugby and boxing) would be viewed by many lesbian feminists as an extreme example of the liberal feminist project, that is, to get more of what men already have. While butch lesbians historically have pushed the boundaries of gender in questioning what it is to be a woman, the taking up of these rugged sports also pushes the boundaries of gender norms.

In this instance, the first Gay Games was unconventional – ironically so because it empowered women to be able to determine their own sports program and practices. At least women at these Games were encouraged, even celebrated, for being forceful, strong and self-determining – on and off the sporting ground. One of the Games volunteers who organised the squash competition had this to say about the sporting opportunities provided to women at and through the Gay Games:

...there is really no other event which is so open and so encouraging of women to participate in sport. Even with the Olympics it is limited. But here is an opportunity for women to play sports and compete in sports and be rewarded in sports and be acknowledged in sports that I can't think of anywhere else it exists, particularly for older women...Now because you have the Gay Games you have city after city after city, organising year round for all four years between the Games, racquetball leagues and volleyball leagues, flag footy leagues and ice hockey games. Because enough interest has been generated, women have networked, they have found each other, they have rented community centres, they have set up leagues, they have set up ways to play each other to stay sharp, to stay competitive, and they have a goal to work towards. It's got to have an incredible sociological impact on local communities...and all of a sudden these are global too and that's a huge opportunity and encouragement for women.¹³¹

McKnight was an advocate of the Gay Games because of its equality of opportunity within the sports program and its encouragement of women's sports involvement.

¹³¹ Interview with Lindy McKnight, San Francisco, November 1996.

The third approach of sports feminists was only in its infancy during Gay Games I and could not really be considered as an option for organisers to develop within the Games ethos and practices. However, there are examples of qualitatively different ways of practicing sport that engaged men and women in cooperative and equal ways that could have been drawn on. The New Games Movement that had originated in California during the late 1970s was one of them. Korfball could also be seen as a very early, although incidental, example of a sport that promotes processes of gender inclusiveness. Hargreaves states that the ethos of korfball “is to undermine sexist stereotypes not only philosophically, but also in the practice of the game”.¹³²

It was invented specifically to involve both men and women in the game. It blends the positive aspects of the sports cultures of men and women rather than accepting without question the norms of men’s sport as the norms for all. Physical aggression is discouraged and co-operation between male and female players is encouraged. The rules of the game were supposedly devised to enable players of varying abilities, heights, and skills to be utilised.

Sports philosopher, Jan English also called for the development of new sports in which “a variety of physical types can expect to excel”.¹³³ English demonstrates the physical and social advantages that men enjoy from the dominant sports within society that emphasise strength, power, speed and aggression. As participation is central to sport, she argues that in a just society:

The primary emphasis would be on participation, with a wealth of local teams and activities available to all, based on groupings of ability.¹³⁴

¹³² Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, p. 248. Korfball was founded in the Netherlands at the beginning of the twentieth century.

¹³³ Jane English, ‘Sex Equality in Sports’ in William J. Morgan and Klaus V. Meier (eds), *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1988), p. 332.

¹³⁴ English, ‘Sex Equality in Sports’, p. 333.

The goal of sport would be the benefits of health, socialising, teamwork and fun and the rewards of social recognition and self-respect would also be available to all players.

Gay Liberation and Sport

The Gay Liberation Movement of the 1970s was also a significant influence on the beliefs and lives of many gay men. This movement flourished within San Francisco during the 1970s. Whilst Gay Liberation of the 1970s did not specifically critique sporting values and practices, this largely white gay male led movement did advocate a radical transformation of sex and gender categories. Liberation would involve what a key activist and theorist of this movement within Australia and the US, Dennis Altman, calls “a much broader sexual liberation” brought about by the transformation of attitudes to gender and sexuality.¹³⁵ Altman identified various goals of liberation including the eradication of sex roles; the transformation of the family; the ending of violence toward homosexuals; the questioning of monolithic categories homosexual and heterosexual in favour of a more bi or pansexuality; an understanding of sexuality as pleasurable and relational rather than primarily reproductive or an indication of status; and a new vocabulary to encompass this new erotic.¹³⁶

On this account, in a world in which gender does not exist and sexuality is not repressed into the binary categories of heterosexual and homosexual, people can develop their bisexual potential. The overarching source of repression for

¹³⁵ Dennis Altman, *Homosexual Oppression and Liberation* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1972), p. 58.

¹³⁶ Altman, *Homosexual Oppression and Liberation*, p. 83.

homosexuals was patriarchal – “male homosexuals share the oppression of patriarchy in that our sexuality, if not our general behaviour, is believed to be non-masculine”.¹³⁷

A small effeminate movement within gay liberation that celebrated effeminacy in gay men and opposed sexism and the privileges accrued from being male, was the most radical manifestation of this liberation movement.

Gay Liberation in action was the first movement to advocate the personal and political need for gays and lesbians to ‘come out’ and be proud of their sexuality.

Consciousness-raising groups were considered important forums in which gays and lesbians discussed their experiences of oppression, and explored a range of things including new modes of democratic participation, the re-fashioning of loving and sexual relationships, educational strategies, community politics and ethics and law reform. Whilst white middle class and educated gay men were the main protagonists within Gay Liberation, the movement also included bisexuals, drag queens, transvestites and transsexuals.¹³⁸ Sport does get a brief mention in Altman’s writing – it is discussed as an important institution for traditional, dominant and repressive masculinity to be socialised, reinforced and reproduced.¹³⁹

Gay Liberation was influential in the US and in other developed countries with concentrated gay populations such as the main cities of Australia, Britain and Northern Europe. Gays in San Francisco were certainly influenced by this movement, although many did not take up the feminist informed critique of gender. By the 1980s,

¹³⁷ Michael Hurley and Craig Johnson, ‘Campfires of the Resistance: Theory and Practice For the Liberation of Male Homosexuals’, *Homosexual Conference Papers* (Melbourne, 1975), p. 24.

¹³⁸ Altman, *Homosexual Oppression and Liberation*, pp. 113-116. This was especially the case in early Gay Liberation within the US. Drag queens and transvestites were important in the Stonewall riots.

¹³⁹ Dennis Altman, *The Homosexualisation of America. The Americanisation of the Homosexual* (New York: St Martins Press, 1982).

when hyper-masculinity was the popular style amongst gay men, the radicalism of gay liberation had well and truly dissipated. Gay pride and the growth and consolidation of a broad gay culture and community were the bequests of this more radical period. The gay men most involved in the organisation of the Gay Games appear to have built upon these bequests with the Games, whilst eschewing an application of the gendered analysis of gay liberation theory.

Conclusion

From this discussion of qualitatively different, more radical ways or envisioning sporting values and practices to enable greater inclusion, equality, cooperation and control by the players of sport, Gay Games I appears as quite a conventional multi-sports event. In many ways it had to be. Sportspeople – gay or straight – often do not question the conventions of sport. They are too immersed in the current culture and the doing of their particular sport to be looking for alternatives. Many do not like their sport being ‘politicised’. As Jim Riordan points out in his account of the Workers Sport Movement of the 1920s and 1930s, sports organisations and events may be more politically effective when they are less explicitly political.¹⁴⁰

Waddell envisaged the creation of an ‘exemplary community’ through the discovery of others and oneself that would be enabled by the coming together of diverse groups of people at the Games. He saw the ‘coming out’ process – the self exploration, consciousness raising, the quest for integrity, the coming to terms with ambiguity, the challenge of living openly in the face of prejudice, and the awareness of what it is like

¹⁴⁰ Jim Riordan, ‘The Worker Sport Movement’ in Jim Riordan and Arnd Kruger (eds) *The International Politics of Sport in the Twentieth Century* (London: E & FN Spon, 1999) p. 105.

to be 'other' as being vital in the creation of such a community. Does this 'coming out' process make gays and lesbians any more aware and respectful of the differences and disadvantages of others within their wider community? Can the discovery process of 'coming out' also be applied to people's experiences and conceptions of sport, enabling sporting values and practices to be more inclusive, playful and humane?

The first Gay Games was conventional through historical necessity – it had to convince sporting gays and lesbians from the US and other developed countries that it was a bona fide sports event. Many gay men, especially in the pace-setting gay city of San Francisco, appear to have been embracing and reasserting their masculinity with a passion during the early 1980s, and orthodox sport was part of this passion. Many sports loving lesbians that came to the Games also embraced conventional sport – although they were keen to cross gender normative boundaries and play sports of all sorts. The erotics of sport were to be kept undercover at these Games. Explicit displays of sexuality were not allowed. To the organisers the Gay Games were primarily about sport, not sex, and an image of normality was vital, especially for the wider world.

Whilst the Gay Games was conventional in many ways, it was also pioneering. Few sports events could boast as broad and ambitious a vision of social justice – one that aimed to transform the practice community as well as the wider largely homophobic world. The Gay Games was the first event to bring gays and lesbians together from across the globe. It was also one of the first mass participatory multi-sport events for adults of all sexual orientations, genders, races and abilities that worked on a global scale. Gay Games I set the scene for future Gay Games.

Chapter 4 We are healthy!

“The Gay Games are not about AIDS, they are about health”¹⁴¹

“The epidemic so transformed the gay and lesbian political movement that, as with our personal lives, we can mark two distinct eras: life before and life after AIDS ”.¹⁴²

Introduction

This chapter looks at the impact of the developing AIDS crisis on the gay and lesbian communities of the developed world with particular attention being paid to the US context. This was the backdrop for Gay Games II, which took place in one of the major epicentres of this crisis – San Francisco in 1986. The AIDS crisis produced a number of significant effects including the transformation of gay and lesbian life and politics, and an increase in the visibility of this community within society generally, as well as the re-pathologisation of homosexuality and an influential backlash against gays and lesbians. Gay and lesbian communities within the US adopted both radical and mainstreaming social and political perspectives and strategies in their ‘battle’ with this backlash, the disease and its consequences.

From this more general social and historical perspective this chapter then examines the impacts of HIV/AIDS on the Gay Games and the contributions that the Games make to ongoing life with the disease. A central theme of the chapter involves an examination of what Gay Games leader Tom Waddell meant by his statement that the ‘Gay Games were not about AIDS, they were about health’. Why does Waddell make

¹⁴¹ Tom Waddell, M.D. ‘Thinking Out Loud’, *Coming Up*, vol. 7, no.11 (August 1986), p. 8.

¹⁴² Urvashi Vaid, *Virtual Equality. The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1995), p. 72.

this statement? What does he mean by ‘health’? Are the Gay Games health promoting? In what ways has this event affected the lives of its participants in health giving ways? Considering that a significant number of gay men have been living with HIV/AIDS since the very beginning of the epidemic, how has the Gay Games included them in the organisational, sporting and cultural aspects of the Games? How have these themes been played out at the four Gay Games that followed the first and what has been the impact of the broader social and political forces emanating from the AIDS crisis on the particular Gay Games being examined?

The Impact of AIDS: Backdrop to the Gay Games Post 1982.

Beginnings of the AIDS Epidemic

During the year before the first Gay Games stories of a number of frightening diseases afflicting gay men in San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles started appearing in the press. There were scattered reports of a small number of relatively young gay men with severe cases of Karposi’s sarcoma, or KS, a rare skin cancer that had previously been found in a more benign form in elderly Jewish, Italian and Ugandan men.¹⁴³ The US Centre for Diseases Control (CDC), based in Atlanta, also observed at this time a surge in the occurrences of a rare lung disease: Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP). This was also afflicting gay men.¹⁴⁴ Whilst not identified initially, the common aetiology of both of these medical conditions was their occurrence in people with

¹⁴³ John-Manuel Andriote, *Victory Deferred. How AIDS Changed Gay Life in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 48-49.

¹⁴⁴ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 48-49.

greatly compromised immune systems.¹⁴⁵ A growing number of gay men appeared to have severely compromised immune systems, which made them susceptible to opportunistic as well as rare diseases.¹⁴⁶

By 1982 these medical conditions had been named GRID – gay related immune deficiency. In June of 1982 CDC researchers had uncovered evidence to link GRID cases with a network of sexual relationships with forty gay men in ten different cities across the US. Here was important evidence to suggest that GRID was sexually transmitted, probably by a single infection agent.¹⁴⁷

One month before the first Gay Games there were 471 men diagnosed with GRID and two new cases were being reported each day.¹⁴⁸ The CDC changed the name of GRID to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) later on that year in recognition that not only gay men were acquiring the disease – haemophiliacs, intravenous drug users and Haitians were also susceptible. Renaming the condition AIDS was thought to lessen the stigma of a disease primarily associated with homosexuals.¹⁴⁹ However, those most susceptible to contracting AIDS were mainly from marginalised groups in society and the stigma stuck.

Tom Waddell first wrote about AIDS in the gay newspaper *Californian Voice* in early 1983. As a specialist in infectious diseases and global medicine, he reflected on the ecology of sexual practices:

¹⁴⁵ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁶ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian: The Life and Death of Dr. Tom Waddell* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996), p. 164.

¹⁴⁷ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, p. 54.

¹⁴⁸ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, p. 54.

¹⁴⁹ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, p. 54.

Our sexual practices are a manifestation of natural drives, but like other natural drives such as the need to eat, to explore other levels of consciousness through drugs and alcohol, there is a point at which we incur the law of diminishing returns. We know what an excess of food or alcohol can do, do we not? We must retreat from some of our sexual pursuits to an area within that natural border which represents safety, and re-assess our practices...¹⁵⁰

In another article he discusses the AIDS induced panic and fear engulfing the gay community of San Francisco that was caused by AIDS. He recounts the “horror stories” of AIDS sufferers being turned away from gay restaurants, being evicted, avoided by friends and lovers. He calls on gay people to exercise compassion in their dealings with one another:

Depression, isolation and fear contribute to a person’s demise and ultimately may affect their immune system further. We need to contribute to the well being of those who have AIDS because to do less is to make them victims.¹⁵¹

Waddell also called for the bathhouses to be closed. For this, many owners and numerous consumers of these sex-oriented businesses vilified him. Freedom of enterprise, choice, even gay liberation and sexual freedom was seen to be at stake.¹⁵² After years of persecution by government authorities, the medical establishment and within society generally, there was suspicion of, and heated opposition to public health officials’ insistence on bathhouse closure and safe sex.¹⁵³ To their credit, many gay men adopted preventative strategies to infection. They practiced safe sex and there was a significant downturn in the numbers frequenting the bathhouses. The

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 160-170.

¹⁵¹ Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 160-170.

¹⁵² Waddell and Schapp, *Gay Olympian*, p. 180. During the same year prominent gay rights campaigner Bill Kraus and his fellow Harvey Milk Democratic Club members published an article in San Francisco’s gay newspaper *The Bay Area Reporter*, naming the bathhouses and sex clubs as dangerous and calling for the gay community to see sense and start practicing safe sex : “Unsafe sex is quite literally – killing us”. These leaders of gay rights were also reviled as traitors. Many gay men at this time saw the promotion of safe sex as a kind of homophobic strategy to keep them from having sex. Larry Kramer received a similar response in New York for trying to send out the same safe sex message. See Andriote, *Victory Deferred* pp. 75-78 and Randy Shilt’s *The Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic* (New York: St Martins Press, 1987).

¹⁵³ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 75–76.

Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence produced and distributed the first safe sex pamphlets long before HIV had been isolated.¹⁵⁴ When significantly more gay men fell ill and died, denial, suspicion and fierce division within their community gave way to crises management, survival and the development of a community of caring and grieving.

Due to the lack of local, state and federal government assistance with the overall care and management of the burgeoning AIDS crisis, the gay and lesbian communities of the major US cities most affected had to help themselves. They established health clinics, promoted safe sex strategies, and formed volunteer networks of carers; provided legal and financial advisers; organised community forums; served as sources of information about AIDS to those in need as well as the media; trained medical personnel; raised their own funds, and the like. Altman points out that the community based education and care models adopted to combat HIV/AIDS world wide actually started within these gay communities.¹⁵⁵

The city of San Francisco was an exception to this. The gay community had considerable political clout. Due to the greater meshing of gay and straight people in the decision making echelons of the city, influential people like the Mayor, the Director of Public Health, and the Board of Supervisors all knew gay people and were more sympathetic.¹⁵⁶ Consequently, Mayor Dianne Feinstein tended to view the AIDS crisis as a health problem rather than a political hot potato. Assistance with services,

¹⁵⁴ Dennis Altman, *Power and Community: Organisational and Cultural Responses to AIDS* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), p. 44.

¹⁵⁵ Altman, *Power and Community*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁶ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 85-89.

education and millions of dollars in funding were some of the vital areas of support that came from the Mayors office.¹⁵⁷

New York's epidemic was very different. It had a large number of injecting drug users, and the sharing of needles amongst poor heterosexual African-Americans and Hispanics was as significant a source of the infection, as was unprotected anal sex amongst white middle class gay men.¹⁵⁸ In the city with the largest number of AIDS cases nationally, the New York Mayors office and its Director of Public Health were far less supportive. It was largely left up to the gay community to look after itself as well as provide services for the many non-gay AIDS sufferers in New York.¹⁵⁹ All gay men lived under a cloud of gloom, for until there was an antibody test that could determine their antibody status, they were told by AIDS educators to presume they had the disease.¹⁶⁰

Backlash

It took six years and thousands more deaths before then President of the US, Ronald Reagan, made his first public speech concerning the AIDS epidemic. Reagan was heavily influenced by the agendas of the religious right that had become powerful in US politics and social life during the 1980s.¹⁶¹ Backlash against the newly won rights and greater social acceptance of gays and lesbians had started in the late 1970s. AIDS provided a powder keg to the cause of anti-gay crusaders and ignited underlying homophobic sentiment within the general community and the mainstream media.

¹⁵⁷ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 85-89.

¹⁵⁸ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 85-86.

¹⁵⁹ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 85-89.

¹⁶⁰ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, p. 337. The antibody test was available at the end of the 1980s.

¹⁶¹ Vaid, *Virtual Equality*, pp. 98-99.

Such bigotry could now be dressed up as concern for public health. The mainstream media became interested in AIDS when it became known that AIDS could be transmitted in the blood supply.¹⁶² Hysterical and sensational reporting became common fare. The religious right made the most of the opportunity to galvanise greater support by appealing to “Gods Laws” as well as homophobia. For instance, in a 1983 fundraising letter, the Moral Majority expressed these obviously prejudicial sentiments:

Why should tax-payers have to spend money to cure diseases that don't have to start in the first place? Let's help the drug users who want to be helped and the Haitian people. But let's let the homosexual community do its own research. Why should the American taxpayer have to bail out these perverted people?¹⁶³

Moral Majority founder, Reverend Jerry Falwell, in a nationally televised American Broadcasting Corporation television show called “The Anatomy of a Crisis”, quoted from St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: “When you violate moral, health and hygiene laws, you reap the whirlwind”. “You cannot shake your fist in God's face and get away with it”.¹⁶⁴ The public's fear of AIDS and underlying homophobia was used by the Christian right to raise money for organisations that supposedly represented clean and godly “family values”. A section of a fundraising letter sent out in 1983 by The American Family Association read:

Dear Family Member, Since AIDS is transmitted primarily by perverse homosexuals, your name on my national petition to quarantine all homosexual establishments is crucial to your family's health and security... These disease carrying deviants wander the streets unconcerned, possibly making you their

¹⁶² Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, p. 65.

¹⁶³ Cindy Patton, *Sex and Germs: The Politics of AIDS* (Boston: South End Press, 1985), p. 97.

¹⁶⁴ Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, pp. 347-348.

next victim. What else can you expect from sex-crazed degenerates but selfishness?¹⁶⁵

Demonstrating their disdain for gay people, the fundamentalist Christian right failed to acknowledge the human suffering of homosexuals dying and grieving from AIDS. They also failed to recognise the selflessness of many gays and lesbians in their caring for friends and loved ones, and their resourcefulness in creating support mechanisms and institutions to deal with the crisis largely on their own.

Gay activists feared that their hard fought basic civil rights were on the line. The American magazine *Newsweek* ran an article in early August 1983 entitled "Gay America in Transition".¹⁶⁶ It noted the use of AIDS by politicians in Texas and Georgia to justify anti-sodomy laws. It also discussed instances of increasing hostility and discrimination against people thought to have AIDS, including being refused service in restaurants and by the ambulance service as well as being evicted from apartments. The article also cited data from a 1983 Gallup poll that indicated that 58% of Americans considered homosexuality an unacceptable lifestyle.¹⁶⁷ In June of 1986 the Supreme Court of America brought down its ruling on the landmark case *Bowers vs. Hardwick*. *Bowers* and *Hardwick* had been arrested for having sex with each other in their own bedroom. By a slim majority the court ruled that gay people were not entitled by the Constitution to privacy. A consequence of this is that they could be arrested for making love in their own bedrooms!¹⁶⁸ From 1986 until 1989, the religious right tried unsuccessfully to pass several laws in California designed to

¹⁶⁵ American Family Association letter, undated (winter 1983), quoted in Cindy Paton, *Sex and Germs: The Politics of AIDS*, p. 85.

¹⁶⁶ Tom Morganthau et al., 'Gay America In Transition', *Newsweek* (August 8, 1983), pp. 29-32

¹⁶⁷ Morganthau et al., 'Gay America In Transition', p. 30.

¹⁶⁸ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 140-141.

restrict the freedom and privacy of people with HIV and AIDS. The gay and lesbian communities in California had to raise millions of dollars for advertising and public education to defeat four ballot initiatives over this period.¹⁶⁹ Is it any wonder that gay communities all over the US felt under siege from the disease within and from the society all around.

HIV/AIDS as Definers of Gays and Lesbians

American gay and lesbian rights leader, Urvashi Vaid, claims in her ground breaking account of political and cultural developments within the gay and lesbian movement and the US since Stonewall, that there are two distinct eras for the movement – one before the AIDS crisis and one following it. She identifies a number of significant consequences from this crisis that have transformed gay and lesbian life within the US.¹⁷⁰ This crisis placed the gay and lesbian movement within the mainstream. To be effective politically, to raise money, gain government support and protect human rights gay and lesbian activists had to form a national movement. This national movement lobbied politicians, worked with the medical and public health establishment, accessed the media, developed public education programs and institutionalised these practices along with its own health clinics. AIDS made gay and lesbian people more visible than ever before. Their communities, cultural and political institutions, lifestyles and struggles were frequently reported in the media.

However, the AIDS epidemic tended to reinforce the association between queerness and illness. Gays were once again pathologised. The political and religious right also

¹⁶⁹ Vaid, *Virtual Equality*, p. 83.

¹⁷⁰ Vaid, *Virtual Equality*, pp. 72-105.

conveniently pathologised lesbians, whose sexual practices placed them in one of the lowest risk groups for contracting HIV within society.

The epidemic also brought the gay and lesbian communities closer together. Many lesbians donated blood to their sick gay male friends, cared for them when they were sick, joined the political movement to protect precarious rights and fight government apathy, donated money and looked after the businesses of the gay men that had died. There was the increased attack on gay rights that came from the religious right. The fear of persecution radicalised many gays and lesbians, who formed the 'in your face', highly controversial political activist movement named ACT UP (Coalition To Unleash Power). ACT UP was active in the late 1980s.¹⁷¹ There was also the day-to-day mental and physical state of gay and bisexual men who lived within the shadow of the disease. Friends and lovers died, talented leaders, artists and sportsmen were lost to their communities.

Queer theory and politics

In this context of radicalisation and activism generated by the AIDS epidemic and "the growing homophobia brought about by public response to AIDS"¹⁷² new forms of political organisation, education and theorising emerged that were encompassed by the term Queer. Queer was a product of debates within and outside of the academy that concerned the validity and efficacy of gay and lesbian identity politics. The politics of difference – within the categories gay and lesbian, as well as the affiliation

¹⁷¹ Altman, *Power and Community*, p. 71.

¹⁷² Barbara Creed, 'Queer Theory and Its Discontents: Queer Desires, Queer Cinema' in Norma Grieve and Ailsa Burns (eds) *Australian Women: Contemporary Feminist Thought* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 152.

of other peoples such as bisexuals and transgender – displaced the “more assimilationist liberal emphasis on similarity to other groups” (we are normal just like everyone else).¹⁷³

This emphasis on difference in queer ways of knowing and organising is also a characteristic of post-structuralist social thought that became influential in the late 1980s and 1990s. Donald Morton comments on the historical specificity of queer and post-structuralist theory and practice:

Rather than as a local effect, the return of the queer has to be understood as the result, in the domain of sexuality, of the (post) modern encounter with – and rejection of – Enlightenment views concerning the role of the conceptual, rational, systematic, structural, normative, progressive, liberatory, revolutionary and so forth, in social change.¹⁷⁴

Universalising, essentialistic, progressive and liberationists views of sexuality, identity and community were critiqued and decentred.

Queer theorist Annamarie Jagose identifies the effects that were “put into circulation around the AIDS epidemic” that nurtured queer theorising and activism.¹⁷⁵ Among these were the problematisation of the individual in biomedical discourses; the effects of safe sex education in emphasising sexual practices over identities in the contraction of HIV; the misrecognition of AIDS as a gay disease (can a disease have a sexual orientation?), the reduction of homosexuality to a fatal pathology and, in her words “the coalition politics of much activism that rethinks identity in terms of affinity

¹⁷³ Lisa Duggan, ‘Making It Perfectly Queer’, in *Socialist Review*, no. 22 (1992), p.15.

¹⁷⁴ Donald Morton, ‘Birth of the Cyberqueer’ *PMLA*, 110, 3 (1995), p. 370.

¹⁷⁵ Annamarie Jagose., *Queer Theory* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1996), p.

rather than essence”.¹⁷⁶ This coalition politics includes gay men and lesbians, bisexuals, transsexual, sex workers, People With AIDS (PWA), health workers and parents and friends of gays.

The International Context of HIV/AIDS

In a time of international air travel and mass consumer and cultural trends, gay and lesbian communities within the main cities of other developed nations were also affected by the AIDS epidemic at roughly the same time. In fact, it was most likely the interaction of gay travellers spending time in places like San Francisco and New York during the early 1980s that contributed to the circulation of the disease.¹⁷⁷

Community and government responses varied. In countries such as the Netherlands and Australia, where religious influences in politics were less pronounced than in the US, and where public health care is universal, gay political activists available and leftist governments responsive, the respective gay communities were involved and supported from the very beginning in the national approach to AIDS.¹⁷⁸ The Netherlands and Australia experienced a much smaller infection rate amongst their gay and non-gay populations.¹⁷⁹ AIDS still exacted its human toll, and some hysterical media coverage and anti-gay backlash was experienced.

¹⁷⁶ Jagose, *Queer Theory*, p. 94; Catherine Saalfeld and Ray Navarro discuss this coalition politics further in ‘Shocking Pink Praxis: Race and Gender on the ACT UP Frontlines’ in Diana Fuss (ed.), *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (New York: Routledge, 1991) pp. 341-69.

¹⁷⁷ Altman, *Power and Community*, p. 13.

¹⁷⁸ Graham Willett, *Living Out Loud: A History of Gay and Lesbian Activism in Australia* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2000), pp. 166-196 Willett gives an excellent account of the history of the disease within the gay community in Australia. Central to this response was the Australian Federal Government minister for Health at this time. Dr. Neil Blewitt, was gay, and a medical doctor within a progressive Labour Party governing Australia. Also see Judith Schuyf and Andre Krouwel, ‘The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement. The Politics of Accommodation’ in B. Adams, J. Duyvendak and A. Krouwel (eds) *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics. National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), pp. 169-170.

¹⁷⁹ Willett, *Living Out Loud*, pp. 166-196.

The stigmatisation of AIDS sufferers is a common theme worldwide, compounded by its association with already stigmatised forms of sexual behaviour (as well as drug use).¹⁸⁰ Fear and panic associated with HIV/AIDS that has occurred worldwide has also been attributed to a marked anxiety over the perceived breakdown of social and bodily systems and boundaries.¹⁸¹ Williamson comments on this panic:

What seems particularly threatening about this is that it is linked to the breakdown of boundaries. The virus threatens to cross over the border between Other and Self: The threat it poses is not only one of disease but one of dissolution, the contamination of categories.¹⁸²

Contrary to the public view that AIDS is a gay disease, the transmission of AIDS in many parts of the developing world is primarily by heterosexual intercourse. The disease has hit women particularly hard as they have had the double impact of being at greater risk of infection and of having the burden of care for those who are ill.¹⁸³ Not only is the “critical relationship between societal discrimination and vulnerability to HIV” obvious in countries such as Africa, the Caribbean, South America and many parts of Asia, but the impacts of development and glaring social and economic inequalities amplify conditions of transmission and severely compromise prevention

¹⁸⁰ Willett, *Living Out Loud*. pp. 53-55.

¹⁸¹ Jan Williamson, ‘AIDS and Perceptions of the Grim Reaper’. *Metro*, 80 (1990), pp. 2-6. O’Neil discusses AIDS as a ‘Globalising panic’ in an article of the same title from M. Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalisation and Modernity* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990). Arthur and Marilouise Kroker draw some ‘eerie resemblances’ between the turn of the millennium mood of contemporary America and historical accounts of the dark psychological impact of the plague on Athenian society in the fifth century B.C. These included acute panic in response to a disease which rapidly spread, was apparently incurable and fatal, its origins were unknown, epidemiology baffling to the medical experts and hence protection from contagion were non-existent. Such panic resulted in an immediate and dramatic breakdown in social solidarity. Ruthless self-interest and preservation became paramount in practically all relationships. See A & M Kroker, (eds) *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, Culture Texts, 1987)

¹⁸² Williamson, ‘AIDS and Perceptions of the Grim Reaper’, p. 5.

¹⁸³ Williamson, ‘AIDS and Perceptions of the Grim Reaper’ p. 19.

and the care of those afflicted.¹⁸⁴ Discrimination and social and economic disadvantage have also underlined the disproportionate numbers of African Americans, Hispanics and other racial minorities within the US contracting HIV.¹⁸⁵ Poverty, discrimination and debilitating illness make attendance at an event like the Gay Games a luxury and an irrelevance for many sufferers living in developed and developing worlds.

HIV/AIDS as a Backdrop to Gay Games II

This general picture of the devastating AIDS epidemic provides a backdrop to Gay Games II and subsequent Gay Games. This epidemic affected the Gay Games in a number of significant ways. The gay and lesbian communities of San Francisco at the time of Gay Games II existed in a thick and dark fog. These were hard times. The vibrant, party atmosphere of the Castro had been replaced by death and mourning. Many gay owned businesses had closed because their owners or clientele had died. Funerals became one of the main gatherings in which community members met up with each other. It was mainly men under forty who were dying from this disease. The old buried the young and the young buried each other. Many felt prematurely aged. Those that survived often suffered guilt, and questioned their own right to live.

¹⁸⁴ Williamson, 'AIDS and Perceptions of the Grim Reaper', p. 16.

¹⁸⁵ The early attitude to AIDS within many black communities in the US was that it was a "white gay thing". Homosexuality was also seen as a disease of white people. Hence, they didn't see the disease as relevant to them. Homosexuality was so harshly condemned in Hispanic, African American and Asian communities that many gays within these communities had to hide their sexual orientation and frequently live double lives. With AIDS black gay men in particular were compelled to speak out, bringing AIDS to the attention of the black leadership and beginning the processes of education, prevention and political action. By the late 1980s, when blacks made up 12% of the US population, 20% of AIDS cases were amongst black men, women and children. A third of AIDS cases amongst 'men who have sex with men' are among men of African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Island descent. See Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 101-102 and pp. 146-150.

This guilt was ameliorated through involvement in AIDS organisations and other gay community organisations. Having AIDS meant that many had to reveal their illness – ‘come out’ so to speak – once again to family and friends. Some had a double ‘coming out’, revealing both their gayness and HIV positive status at the same time. Their families abandoned some at their greatest time of need, whilst others experienced a greater renewal of their closest friendships and family ties.

Miami psychiatrist Karl Goodkin observed that men with HIV infection and AIDS who had a hard time coping with the grief of losing loved ones seemed to have a faster onset of their illness.¹⁸⁶ He divided coping strategies of grieving into “active and passive”. Active copers were realistic about their prognosis and the state of their community. They saw their illness as a reason to take better control of their lives by working with AIDS organisations or taking on other useful community service and political roles. Passive copers by contrast gave in more to their feelings of helplessness and impotence in the face of the disease. Goodkin found that the active copers seemed to live longer and with less stress with the disease. Aspects of psychological wellbeing such as having a positive outlook, stress relief, making social connections and taking an active role in managing one’s health and care, appear to be beneficial to the functioning of the immune system.¹⁸⁷ Physician Tom Waddell noted this in his weekly column in the San Francisco gay press. He saw the Gay Games as vital to the health of the gay community at this time. The Gay Games for him was not about AIDS, as so much in gay life had become subsumed, the Games were about health. What did Waddell mean by this? Let’s turn to the second Gay Games and see.

¹⁸⁶ Cited in Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp. 352-353.

¹⁸⁷ James Gillet, Roy Cain and Dorothy Pawluch, ‘Moving Beyond the Biomedical: The Use of Physical Activity to Negotiate Illness’, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, vol. 19 (2002) pp. 380-381.

“Triumph in 1986”: Gay Games II and the Procession of the Arts.

The Goals of Gay Games II

During the closing ceremony of Gay Games I, Waddell announced that the second Gay Games would be held in four years time in San Francisco. The first planning meeting for these Games appears to have been held in November of 1983.¹⁸⁸

Members of the SFAA Board formulated the goals and purpose of Gay Games II at this planning retreat.¹⁸⁹ The number one goal was “To demonstrate that homosexuals are not different”. Normalisation and assimilation into the mainstream were still the primary concerns of the Board. Other goals that continue to be emphasised for this Games were: the working together of gay men and lesbians; the promotion of “participation for self-fulfilment” over winning; the promotion of the Games as an inclusive event; the provision of positive role models for gay and lesbian people; the fostering of pride amongst “contestants and spectators in the total community”; the demystification of sports in the gay community and “the fostering of a wider awareness and acceptance of the Games in the non-gay community”.

New goals and emphases were also present including the promotion of ‘positive lifestyles and health’; the promotion of ‘lesbians and gay men as family, especially in

¹⁸⁸ SFAA, Document titled: *Goals/Purpose/Mission of Gay Games II*, (As developed during the Board retreat, 9/11/83). Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series II, Gay Games II folder 1, 1983. There is no indication of the actual SFAA Board members who attended this retreat, nor the process used to distil these outcomes.

¹⁸⁹ SFAA, *Goals/Purpose/Mission of Gay Games II*.

San Francisco', the 'working together of gays and straights'; the fostering of participation from all age groups and 'Third World Countries' and a 'focus of sport and culture' at these Games. These far ranging and ambitious set of goals indicated that Gay Games II was conceived as a multi-faceted sport and cultural event with a strong commitment to social justice and the affirmation of the lesbian and gay community. These Games would not be reduced to and would not be consumed by – the AIDS crisis. The planning and organisation of these Games also confirms this point.

Participation and Outreach

Outreach appears to have been extended especially to 'senior' gays and lesbians. Evidence of this is obvious in two organisational details of the Games. At the Opening Ceremony members of the Gay and Lesbian Outreach to Elders Program carried the Gay Games torch into the stadium for the final leg of the torch relay. A feature article in the program explains the significance of this ritual: SFAA were 'highlighting the contributions and importance of Gay Seniors to the overall community' and promoting their active participation in the Games.¹⁹⁰ One of the most respected leaders from the women's community, Rikki Streicher, was especially honoured at these Games for her considerable contribution to San Francisco's lesbian and gay life since 1945. Streicher opened the first lesbian bar in San Francisco in the 1960s and had served on a long list of community organisations, including Treasurer of the SFAA. She was given the special honour of lighting the plinth within Kezar Stadium at the Games opening. Sports convenors were also asked by the Sports

¹⁹⁰ SFAA, *Triumph in 1986*, Official Program of Gay Games II (August 1986), p.22. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series II, Gay Games II folder 2, 1986.

Directors of these Games – Sara Lewinstein and Hal Herkenhoff, to organise their sports along age categories so as to include older athletes.¹⁹¹

International Participation

Whilst there are no records of actual outreach activities and funds set aside to “assist participation by Third World Countries”, Gay Games II had a much more international feel. Countries displayed in the official Gay Games II program included: Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Greece, Guam, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Samoa, Virgin Islands and West Germany, as well as two hundred and twenty one cities from the US.¹⁹² As in 1982, the majority of participants were from California.¹⁹³ To his credit, one of the original Board members for Gay Games I, Paul Mart, continued to travel the globe at his own expense informing established gay and lesbian groups in major cities of the Gay Games.¹⁹⁴

Outreach to ‘Third World’ gays and lesbians also referred to the efforts taken by the Outreach committee to increase the participation of minorities within the US, especially African Americans and Hispanics. ‘Third world’ was the term commonly used in the US during the 1980s to encompass these populations. The only African American on the Board of Directors of the Gay Games – Lloyd Jenkins – chaired the Outreach committee. As no records were kept of the outreach methods used, and there

¹⁹¹ Hal Herkenhoff, *Sports Director's Report, Gay Games II, San Francisco* (August 9-17 1986), p. 11 (section titled: Determination of the Rules and Regulation by Committee). Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series II, Gay Games II folder 3, 1986.

¹⁹² SFAA, *Triumph in 1986*, Official Program of Gay Games II, p. 64.

¹⁹³ As indicated by the long list of cities from California listed in the official Gay Games II program and from organisers' accounts.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Paul Mart, Melbourne January 1987.

was no final reporting of the diversity of participants, it is hard to comment on this aspect of inclusiveness during Gay Games II.

Efforts to equalise the participation of women with men continued in the lead up to Gay Games II. Female and male co-Chairs were effective on the organising groups of many of the sports. Women were also well represented on many of the operational committees of the Games. The use of lesbian sporting networks and personal contacts within the US appears to have been the main outreach methods used. Sara Lewinstein and the women's outreach committee once again worked tirelessly to recruit as many women to the games as possible. Equalising the participation of women in comparison to men coming from outside of the US was not an explicit goal of women's outreach. Even so, the officially quoted figure of 44% of the sports participants being women at these Games, is remarkable.¹⁹⁵ In mixed gender sports events of this time such as the Olympics, women represent less than 30% of the competitors.¹⁹⁶

The Sports Directors, as well as the Communications committee and its Director Roy Coe, took up the recruitment of local and international athletes.¹⁹⁷ Due to a small budget direct sports networking especially within the US was the most effectively used strategy. Sports Directors attended national (US) and local gay and lesbian sports events, spoke about the Games and distributed promotional information.

¹⁹⁵ Roy Coe, *A Sense of Pride: The Story of Gay Games II* (San Francisco, CA: Pride Publications, 1986), p.19.

¹⁹⁶ At the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics women made up 22.89% of all competitors. At 1988 Seoul Olympics they made up 25.84% of competitors. See Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 220.

¹⁹⁷ Hal Herkenhoff, *Sports Director's Report*, p.16.

The goal involving the bringing together of ‘gays and straights’ was an understandable one in San Francisco – a city in which this appears to have been more common place especially within the government and private work sectors. Achieving this in sports may have been more novel. It appears that a number of sports gained official sanctioning from the official amateur sporting body. These were marathon, track and field, swimming and diving, wrestling and triathlon.¹⁹⁸ Trained officials, many of them heterosexual, were required to oversee these sports and ongoing liaison with these bodies was also required to organise the sporting competition. Building positive bridges between the gay and predominantly heterosexual mainstream sporting worlds was an important outcome of many of the Gay Games.

Cultural Festival

A small cultural festival was also staged during Gay Games II, entitled Procession of the Arts. According to the Chair of the Cultural Events Committee, Michael Clarke, it was not until November of 1985 that the committee first convened and the cultural program began to take shape. The cultural program was an afterthought, necessary to gain tax exemption. The Gay Games were still primarily a sports event. Key Games leaders such as Tom Waddell wanted it that way. Michael Clarke recalls a change in this outlook by the end of the Games:

Tom himself told me, as we were walking back from the physique contest one afternoon, that he really had seen how important the cultural festival was and how much it had to contribute...

¹⁹⁸ Hal Herkenhoff, *Sports Director's Report*, p. 23.

He was impressed by how well organised the festival was and how it complemented the sports program.¹⁹⁹ The Procession of the Arts program encompassed lesbian and gay choruses and marching bands, African American artists exhibiting their works, gay literary readings, various live theatre productions, modern dance performances, chamber music, cabaret and a three day gay film festival. This was a significant development from Gay Games I.

Artistic and cultural expression has been a major strength of gay and lesbian peoples the world over. The contribution that gay people have made to cultural fields such as music, theatre, film, dance, literature and the visual arts has been significant. One of the primary aims of the Gay Games from its inception was the provision of opportunities for participants to enjoy and to shine in sporting pursuits they were good at, to experience new sporting pursuits, and the to demonstrate that gay men and lesbians are multi-faceted as individuals and as a community.

A rich community life is one in which its members can express all of their capacities and talents at one of their peak events. Cultural representation, expression and exploration can be vital for any society as it can enrich the understanding members have of themselves and their relationship to others within and outside of their primary grouping. It can give expression to different ways of seeing, experiencing and understanding, in addition to celebrating human beauty and creativity.

¹⁹⁹ It should be noted that Waddell was not opposed to Cultural expression per se. On the contrary – he held music and theatre nights at his home and he painted and danced. Waddell lived in a renovated German Gymnastics Hall and house and had plenty of room to hold such cultural events. I visited his house whilst in San Francisco. His interest in the arts is documented in Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, p. 4.

Similarly, lesbian and gay cultural performances can be critical, celebratory and commemorative, of the communities they represent. Such performances often involve the exploration of many of the main concerns of gay and lesbian life. They can also take on an educative purpose. For example, a play performed during the Cultural Festival by Theatre Rhinoceros titled 'Unfinished Business: The AIDS Show – provided a 'sensitive, educational and entertaining' forum on AIDS.²⁰⁰

Michael Clarke captured his reasons for wanting cultural expression to be an integral feature of the Gay Games. He was not interested in helping to shape a major gay and lesbian event with a focus on sport that largely replicated what the mainstream and predominantly heterosexual community. In his words:

I think art is very important to the spiritual health of our community, and that's why I was so adamant about getting in with the Games, while, I respect and admire and recognise the need for us to recognise and accept ourselves as physical beings who are quite capable of breaking through those old myths, I don't want to see us do it at the sacrifice of the cultural artistic spiritual side of us.... One of the things that frustrated me about when women got into management was that in my naiveté I thought well, great, they'll be able to bring their special qualities, we will be able to re think this approach and style of management because I didn't like the old patriarchal bullshit military approach. Well of course what happens is it's the women who adapt to that and the strongest that end up going there – and it's the same kind of thing, like what I don't want to see is us turn into another version of the heterosexual community, even more exaggerated.²⁰¹

Clarke has had to push for a more equal place for the cultural component of the Gay Games since his first involvement as a leader in 1986. Cultural participants were not accorded equal status to sports participants in the Gay Games until 1998. They could not march in the parades of the Opening and Closing ceremonies and were not included in the key programs that made the Games more accessible to participants,

²⁰⁰ SFAA, *Triumph In '86* Official Program of Gay Games II, p. 50.

²⁰¹ Interview with Michael Clarke, San Francisco, November 1996.

such as outreach and hosted housing. In comparison with future Cultural Festivals of the Gay Games this festival was a relatively small affair.

Organisation

During 1984 planning and the organisation for Gay Games II got underway. Waddell fulfilled the role of Executive Director and received a \$25,000 salary. The secretary of SFAA, Shawn Kelly, was employed as the Assistant Director on a salary of \$20,000 per year. Kelly was drawn to SFAA and the Gay Games through his involvement with the Gay Tennis Federation. This is where he had made his first real gay friends in San Francisco since moving there in 1978 whilst in his late 20s. He saw gay athletics as perfectly placed to provide “community service, high visibility and challenge, and a vehicle for advancing the gay liberation movement”.²⁰² By mid-year the paid position of Waddell was being questioned by a number of members of the Board of SFAA. They considered it inappropriate to pay the small amount of funds that were available to Waddell, whom they saw as a wealthy doctor. Waddell agreed to take up the honorary position of President of SFAA and Shawn Kelly was appointed Consulting Executive Director.²⁰³ This appears to have been the start of ill feelings between Waddell and some members of the Board. Waddell’s relationship with Kelly also soured. For this and other reasons that go beyond the scope of this thesis, certain policy and governance issues were unresolved.

²⁰² Coe, *A Sense of Pride*, p. 24 and also in an interview with Shawn Kelly, San Francisco November 1996.

²⁰³ The term Consulting Executive Director is the one used by Kelly in his interview.

With two years to go before the Gay Games were scheduled, Shawn Kelly busied himself recruiting volunteers to put the Games in place. A committee structure was established covering areas such as: communications, publications, planning, cultural events, development, facilities and transportation, housing, medical services, opening and closing ceremonies, outreach, registration, security, decorations, graphics and sports. The Directors of each of these committees all met up once every month to report on the developments in their respective areas, to coordinate their activities where appropriate, and to discuss issues and explore ideas. Each sport also had an organising committee.

The Board of SFAA's primary responsibility was to make overall policy, to gauge the progress of the organisational effort, and to raise funds. Key executive members of the Board members were Waddell as President, Lawrence Sheehan as Secretary and Rikki Streicher as Treasurer. Sheehan and other Directors who were also Attorneys of Law, Mary Dunlap and Lawrence Wilson, provided important legal advice. Board members from Gay Games I, Rose Mary Mitchell, Sara Lewinstein, Paul Mart and Chris Puccinelli continued their dedicated efforts to the Gay Games on this Board. New members were Lloyd Jenkins, Peter Middendorf and Jean Nelsen. Most Board members had full time employment in the legal, management and business professions.²⁰⁴

By December of 1984 Kelly had been made the official Executive Director. He provided vision and ideas, supervised and motivated staff, acted as one of the main spokespersons for the Gay Games, kept track of the budget, ensured planning

²⁰⁴ SFAA, *Triumph in 1986*, Official Program of Gay Games II, pp. 8-9.

milestones were met, coordinated the activities of the committees, and serviced the Board. The first Games had been staged successfully with mainly ad hoc and frenetic organisation by a small group of core volunteers. These volunteers and especially Tom Waddell had provided the blueprint and established most of the important relationships and networks for future Games to build upon. The second time around, planning was more systematic and realistic. The Games had an effective organisational structure. There were 1,200 volunteers to share the workload and stage an event that attracted three times as many participants as Gay Games I - 3,482 athletes and numerous uncounted cultural performers.

Promotion and Volunteer Recruitment

These Games were promoted heavily within the mainstream media and in public places throughout San Francisco. Billboards advertising the Games appeared in the subway stations of the city's transport service, the MUNI, in the few weeks leading up to the Games. Money was also spent on a radio campaign across San Francisco's four main stations. The Gay Pride Day march was also used to promote the Games to the local gay and lesbian community.²⁰⁵ According to Roy Coe many volunteers signed up for the Games following these promotional efforts. The media coverage and Games advertisements within the city also suggest that San Francisco's general community were made aware of this second staging of the Gay Games. This festive event was a major contrast to the 'gloom and doom' that had beset San Francisco's gay community over the past few years.

²⁰⁵ Coe, *Sense of Pride*, pp.19-20.

In the month before the Games the main office was very busy. Volunteers sold tickets, prepared athlete registration packs, answered copious Games queries, matched up hosts with guests in the hosted housing scheme and attended to all last minute organisational minutiae. The key volunteers with main portfolios also worked long days during the Games lead up. co-Chair for registration, Jan Allen, had the task of overseeing all athlete registration matters. Sports Directors and organisers finalised all last minute arrangements with the sports competitions. According to Shawn Kelly, the contributions of one of the key volunteers, the Director of Facilities and Transportation, Derek Liekty, was central to the success of these Gay Games.²⁰⁶ There were three times the number of participants expected in the sports program, six more sports, and the sports venues were spread over both sides of the San Francisco Bay. Liekty oversaw all the venue operational requirements for the sports competitions including hiring, access, sports requirements, amenities and contracts. He also negotiated and secured all the necessary council and police permits as well as insurance cover for Gay Games II.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony for Gay Games II was held on August 9, 1986 at Kezar Stadium. Rita Mae Brown once again played mistress of ceremonies, setting the scene with the following lines:

I emphasise “gay” in Gay Games. These Games are very important to us, not just because they bring us all together, but because here we show the world who we really are. We’re intelligent people, we’re attractive people, we’re caring people, we’re healthy people, and we are proud of who we are.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Interview with Kelly. Also see Coe, *Sense of Pride*, pp. 20-21.

²⁰⁷ Coe, *Sense of Pride*, p. 29.

Calvin Remsberg, 'star of Cats', sang the Star Spangled Banner, and was followed by an American Flag Field display and a Concert Music Festival performed by the Lesbian and Gay Band of America. Uniformed athletes once again paraded around the stadium behind placards indicating their city of origin. Cities were grouped with their respective countries, and the spectacle of national, regional and rainbow flags gave the procession colour and tradition. Dignitaries, including the Mayor of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein, and Tom Waddell, made speeches. Waddell also emphasised that: 'Today, and for this week, we see ourselves as we really are: active, productive, creative and healthy. Reverend Jane Spahr, founder of the Marin AIDS Network (Marin County, California) and Executive Director of the Ministry of Light, gave a special invocation. She also emphasised the Games as a celebration and affirmation of being gay and called on those present to 'stand and be with our many gay brothers who are not here because of AIDS '.

Sports Program

Over the week of Gay Games II gay and lesbian athletes contested seventeen sports including basketball, billiards, bowling, cycling, golf, marathon, physique, powerlifting, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, wrestling (for men only), raquetball and triathlon. Boxing was scheduled but was cancelled twelve days before the games were to commence due to lack of entries. Selection of these sports had been based on the list of sports from Gay Games I and feedback from athletes and spectators at these Games. The Sports Directors determined that they would only accept sports that enjoyed substantial participation from gay and lesbian athletes, experienced local leaders who could organise the sports

competition and financial feasibility.²⁰⁸ Sports organising committees set the rules of their sport according to the rules of the appropriate governing body from the mainstream sport context, and seven sports were sanctioned by these bodies.²⁰⁹

Along similar lines to Gay Games I, inclusion was promoted by two main strategies; the use of age and ability categories to encourage greater participation, and offering nearly the same sports programs for men and women.²¹⁰ Emphasis on participation for its own sake and the benefits of striving to achieve personal bests over winning as the only end were once again the official ethos guiding play. This ethos appears to have been evinced in the encouraging environment experienced once again by many participants. A seasoned competitor of the highest calibre, 1976 Canadian volleyball Olympian, Betty Baxter, encapsulated this experience:

I honestly believe that what I saw in San Francisco was a first...the first time I'd seen the kind of international sporting event that also catered to people's need to come together and play for fun. That is something that competitive sports lost a long time ago.²¹¹

Gay Games II Overview

Gay Games II appears to have been a success in organisational, financial, philosophical and programming terms. The event ran smoothly and with few organisational difficulties. The Games operational budget totalled \$650,000 and ended in surplus.²¹² The Games goals of inclusion and participation were evident in

²⁰⁸ Herkenhoff, *Sports Directors Report*, p. 9.
²⁰⁹ Herkenhoff, *Sports Directors Report*, p. 23.
²¹⁰ Herkenhoff, *Sports Directors Report*, pp. 11-12.
²¹¹ Betty Baxter, quoted in an extensive interview in Coe, *A Sense of Pride*, p. 97.
²¹² Interview with Shawn Kelly. Also see Coe, *Sense of Pride*, p. 25.

the sports programming, the organisational structure, the promotional efforts and the ethos of participation during the Games themselves.

In Olympic fashion the marathon was the closing sports event of the Games, finishing in the Kezar stadium just prior to the start of the Closing ceremony.²¹³ Armistead Maupin acted as the master of ceremonies once again, and the main entertainment included combined gay and lesbian choruses, marching bands, acrobatics and flag twirling and a headline performance by singer Jennifer Holliday. The athletes and organisers of the Games paraded, inspirational speeches were made, and the Games torch was extinguished. The closing party culminated with a large Tea Dance on centre field. During the closing proceedings representatives from Metropolitan Vancouver Arts and Athletics (MVA&AA) were ceremoniously handed the Gay Games flag as the next hosts for the Gay Games, to be held in 1990. The Gay Games had been nurtured and grown to become a viable, ongoing hall-mark event for gay and lesbian peoples worldwide.

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Gay Games II

Gay Games II could not help but be affected by the AIDS crisis that beset the gay community. Organisers such as Shawn Kelly, the Secretary of SFAA Larry Sheehan, and Tom Waddell reported experiencing opposition to the staging of the Games.²¹⁴ People feared that valuable funding - which came mainly in the form of donations - would be taken away from the medical crisis to pay for the Gay Games. They feared that the volunteers who were needed to perform many vital functions in the care and

²¹³ SFAA, *Triumph in 1986*, Official Program of Gay Games II, pp. 20-21.

²¹⁴ Interviews with Kelly and Larry Sheehan, San Francisco November 1996.

welfare of those with HIV and AIDS, would also have had their time and energies redirected to what some might consider a non-essential and frivolous sporting and cultural event. Some who saw the staging of the Gay Games during a time in which the gay community of San Francisco was at one of its lowest points was a bit like dancing on the graves of the dead and the dying. There was also the fear that bringing gay men from other parts of the world to San Francisco at this time could spread the disease further. Fatalism and gloom was the prevailing mood.

Kelly, Sheehan and Waddell saw the significance of AIDS for the Gay Games in a very different light. In his regular column 'Thinking Out Loud, in the Bay Area gay newspaper *Coming Up*, Tom reflected on this issue.²¹⁵ He stated that the SFAA Board viewed the Games as "an opportunity to elevate consciousness about AIDS". Because San Francisco's gay community had responded so effectively and responsibly to this crisis they were in an excellent position to educate about AIDS prevention and care programs.

Part of this education process involved the distribution of safe sex information and condoms on registering for the Games. Games organisers had made a conscious effort to work with the established AIDS support organisations within the city, such as the Shanti Project, SF AIDS Foundation, Coming Home Hospice and STOP AIDS. This cooperation involved the distribution of literature, the holding of joint fundraisers, and the provision of complimentary tickets for persons with AIDS. Persons with AIDS

²¹⁵ Tom Waddell, 'Thinking Out Loud', *Coming Up*, p. 8.

were encouraged to get involved with the Gay Games as athletes, volunteers and spectators.²¹⁶

Towards promoting this end, Waddell included a very personal letter written by a gay man who had taken up body building after he had been diagnosed with AIDS.

Christen Haren intended to participate in this sport at the Gay Games. Joining a gym and working out enabled him to reconnect with his body after a period of severe illness where even walking across a room was an ordeal. Haren believed that the Gay Games could offer some positive and important benefits to other PWA:

I fought my way out of the closet some years ago, and I'm not willing to be put into another closet just because I have AIDS. What's important here is not that Christen is entering the Games, but that Christen Haren, a PWA, is participating to the best of his ability. Dr. Waddell, by working together, we can assist in instilling pride in those who have had it taken away. Maybe we can even strengthen the resolve to fight and live, in those who have given up in their pain and isolation.²¹⁷

Pain, isolation, depression, debilitation, stigmatisation, the failing of youthful bodies, fatalism in the face of an apparently fatal disease such as AIDS that had no cure, was the fate endured by many PWA at this time. The Games had given Haren a means to reconnect with others through his training preparations and anticipated participation in the Gay Games. More than this, they were for him a context in which gay people could express their mutual care and concern and share their "strength and hope for each other".²¹⁸ This is one of the ways in which Waddell envisaged the Gay Games as being about health.

²¹⁶ Interview with Kelly. Also noted in Coe, *A Sense of Pride*, p. 14.

²¹⁷ Christen Haren as quoted in Waddell, 'Thinking Out Loud', p. 8.

²¹⁸ Haren as quoted in Waddell, 'Thinking Out Loud', p. 8.

Body-building is an interesting choice of sport to take up whilst living with AIDS. Working out at the gym to build a muscular, fit and 'desirable' body was - and continues to be - very popular amongst gay men.²¹⁹ The physique contest at the Gay Games was – and continues to be – one of the most popularly contested and watched sports events. Haren, like the ten male athletes living with HIV and AIDS who were interviewed in a US study looking into the problems they faced and the ways that they coped, found the decline in physical fitness and attractiveness could be arrested with regular exercise, especially weight training.²²⁰ Maintaining a positive body image and bolstering self-esteem in the face of this disease was important to these men.²²¹

Scientific research into the impact of moderate exercise regimes on the immune systems of people who are HIV positive has been inconclusive, although a number of the leading researchers strongly recommend aerobic exercise training as an important therapy.²²² Such exercise does not appear to detrimentally affect the immune system and there are positive benefits such as increased muscular strength and body mass, improved oxygen uptake and psychological wellbeing.²²³ Reductions in stress and

²¹⁹ In an article on the increasing popularity within the gay male community of San Francisco working out in the gym, Mike Hippler documents the emergence of the Gay gym – “created predominantly by and for Gays”: ‘Gay Gyms in the City’, *BAR*, vol XII no. 52 (Dec 30 1982). Brian Pronger comments in his book *The Arena of Masculinity, Sport, Homosexuality and the Meaning of Sex* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990): ‘In droves, gay men are going to gyms, pumping up their muscles, so much so, that, at least in major urban centres, there are often more gay than straight men in many athletic facilities. Muscles have great power, a power that consists not only of their ability to move heavy objects but also as puissant symbols of masculinity’ (p. 154).

²²⁰ K. Gilbert., ‘Reconstructing Lives: The Voices of Athletes with HIV/AIDS’ in G. Sankaran, K. Volkwein and D. Bonsall.(eds) *HIV/AIDS in Sport. Impacts, Issues and Challenges*, (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics, 1999), pp. 45-57.

²²¹ Gilbert, ‘Reconstructing Lives: The Voices of Athletes with HIV/AIDS’, p. 51.

²²² W. Stringer, ‘ HIV and AIDS Aerobic Exercise: Current Recommendations’, *Sport Medicine*, vol. 28, no. 6 (Auckland N.Z, Dec 1998), pp. 389-395; Gillet, Cain and Pawluch, ‘ Moving Beyond the Biomedical’, pp 371-380; R. J. Shepard, ‘ Exercise, Immune Function and HIV Infection’, *Journal of Sport Medicine and Physical Fitness*, vol. 38, no 2 (Torinio, Italy, June 1998), pp. 101-110.

²²³ Bente Pedersen, ‘HIV, Exercise, and Immune Function’ in G. Sankaran, K. Volkwein and D. Bonsall., (eds) *HIV/AIDS in Sport. Impacts, Issues and Challenges* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics, 1999), pp. 28-32.

depression, increased social interaction and a greater sense of control over one's health and wellbeing are some of the reported psychological benefits of a regular exercise for people living with HIV.²²⁴

However, exercise of acute intensity carried out over longer duration's (one hour and over) has been shown to have a suppressive effect on the immune system, especially immediately after a work out. During this period of suppression, termed "the open window": there is an increased susceptibility to infection even amongst elite level HIV negative athletes. HIV positive subjects have been shown to have an impaired immune system at rest, and an 'impaired ability to mobilise vital neutrophils (a type of white blood cell) to the blood during exercise stress'.²²⁵ Therefore, they are probably more prone to entering this 'open window' and may more readily acquire infections during this post exercise immunosuppressed period.²²⁶ Enough time to allow the immune system to recover between exercise bouts and the adoption of moderate exercise/sport training regimes would appear to be the desired training program parameters for people living with HIV.

Exercise for people with fully developed AIDS may be more problematic. Shepard warns that "in fully developed AIDS, the ability to exercise may be compromised by deteriorations in cardiorespiratory and neuromuscular function".²²⁷ This is important

²²⁴ W. Stringer, M Berezowskaya, W O'Brien, C. Beck, R Casaburi, 'The Effects of Exercise Training on Aerobic Fitness, Immune Indices, and Quality of Life in HIV+ Patients', *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* vol 30, no. 1 (Baltimore, Jan 1998), pp. 11-16; Stringer, ' HIV and AIDS Aerobic Exercise: Current Recommendations', pp. 389-395; Gillet, Cain and Pawluch, ' Moving Beyond the Biomedical', pp 371-380; Shepard, ' Exercise, Immune Function and HIV Infection', pp. 101-110.

²²⁵ Pedersen, 'HIV, Exercise, and Immune Function', p. 31.

²²⁶ Pedersen, 'HIV, Exercise, and Immune Function', pp. 31-32.

²²⁷ Shepard, 'Exercise, Immune Function and HIV Infection', pp. 101-103.

health information for people with HIV who are training in preparation for a Gay Games. Such research had not been carried out at the time of Gay Games II. However, it would be valuable pre Games information that could be distributed – albeit in a more detailed and user- friendly format, as part of a general fitness and health education program.

Waddell extends the notion of health beyond fitness to include character building. For Waddell, the Games are a vehicle in which gay men and lesbian women can demonstrate their productive, creative, multi-faceted and thus - *healthy* culture.²²⁸ The many talents and abilities of this community are on display. The staging of the Games evinces the resilience, resourcefulness and courage of this community in such times of trial. In his address at the Closing Ceremony, Shawn Kelly told his audience: “the Games demonstrate that we are far from defeated”. He is even more forceful in his optimistic ambitions for the Games and their effects on AIDS in this pre Games comment:

The Gay Games are the antithesis of the AIDS crisis. In many respects our community needs a psychological boost, and this will provide it. We are going to take this issue of AIDS and blast right through it.²²⁹

The chief spokesmen for the Gay Games were responsible for presenting them in as positive a light as possible. Waddell, Kelly and SFAA’s emphasis on the health promoting aspects of the Gay Games contrasted with the main response of the mainstream media to this event. The media’s focus on the gay community since the

²²⁸ Pedersen., ‘HIV, Exercise, and Immune Function’, p. 31. These sentiments were also expressed in Waddell’s speech at the Opening Ceremony of Gay Games II.

²²⁹ Coe interviewed Shawn Kelly during the year leading up to the Gay Games. This comment appears in his book *A Sense of Pride*, p. 14.

epidemic and for these Games was constantly on AIDS, and it was difficult to promote healthy images of gay people. As a festival of sports, where participants have to physically train and possess a reasonable level of fitness, the Gay Games provided an antidote to this overwhelming image of the gay community as diseased. The concern with proving through the first Gay Games that the gay and lesbian community was 'normal' was superseded by the concern that this community was projected in as healthy a light as possible. Furthermore, greater emphasis appears to have been placed on affirming lesbian and gay culture and concomitantly the participants of the Gay Games. In times of crises, the raising of pride and esteem within the individuals and the communities most affected appeared to be vital.

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Subsequent Gay Games.

There was a direct need to counter this conflation of homosexuality with disease in the lead up to Gay Games III and IV. The fear of the spread of HIV and AIDS was used by Christian fundamentalists in media campaigns designed to galvanise public support and stop both Gay Games III and Gay Games IV from taking place. These campaigns required direct intervention on behalf of Gay Games organisers to address potentially damaging image making of the gay community and the Games. Local and State Government support, corporate sponsorship and the public context within which the Gay Games was to take place, could have been affected. The Medical Health Officer of the City of Vancouver had already warned Gay Games III organisers of the potentially dangers such associations could cause.²³⁰ In a letter to Barry McDell,

²³⁰ F. J. Blatherwick, M.D., F.R.C.P (c) Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Health Department, 1060 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. letter to Mr. Barry McDell, Chairperson, Metropolitan Vancouver Athletics and Arts Association, titled 'Re: Celebration '90, dated (28 June 1987). Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, Gay Games III folder 1, 1987.

Chairperson of Metropolitan Vancouver Arts and Athletics Association (MVA&AA)

– the organisation responsible for staging these Games – the Medical Health Officer stated:

AIDS must not dominate this festival of the arts and athletics, nor must homophobia. To ensure that this is so will require inspired effort on the part of all of us from now to August 1990. We will have to work very hard to ensure that all our citizens understand that AIDS is a disease that is not spread by casual social contact and that the presence of gays in our community poses absolutely no risk to our non-gay citizens. If we are successful the health and productive energy displayed by the participants will prove to be an inspiration to us all of us, gay or not.²³¹

Unfortunately, MVA&AA couldn't control the local Christian fundamentalists.

Unnamed "Christian leaders who live in Greater Vancouver" took out full-page advertisements in Vancouver's two major daily newspapers calling for the cancellation of the Gay Games:

WE THEREFORE WITH ALL REVERENCE AND SERIOUS INTENTION, IN CHRIST'S NAME, MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT: THAT BECAUSE THESE GAMES WILL BRING GOD'S JUDGEMENT UPON US ALL IN THIS CITY, WE THEREFORE FORBID THEM IN THE NAME AND AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST. WE BELIEVE THAT THEY SHALL NOT TAKE PLACE.²³²

In the Christian fundamentalist newspaper *Life Gazette* direct reference was made to the Gay Games fomenting disease, in particular AIDS.²³³ A whole edition of the paper was dedicated to distorted and exaggerated information concerning gay sexual practices and the incidence of venereal diseases within the community. In fact, gays

²³¹ Blatherwick, M.D., F.R.C.P (c) Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Health Department, letter to Mr. Barry McDell (MVA&AA) titled ' Re: Celebration '90'.

²³² The banner headline of these adverts was 'TIME IS RUNNING OUT' appearing over a huge hourglass. *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* carried these advertisements at a cost of \$15,000. They appeared on Sunday November 5, 1989. The public statement reproduced here was in capitals in the original.

²³³ Noble Green, 'Sodomite Invasion Planned for 1990', *Life Gazette*, vol 1, no. 6 (October 1988) This newspaper was published in Surrey, British Columbia.

are reduced to sex crazed, sick, disease ridden 'animals' – a public health menace and an abomination to god fearing Christian society.²³⁴

Gay Games III organisers quickly responded to the barrage of media attention created by these advertisements. They answered questions, they lobbied newspapers, politicians and civil liberties organisations for public support, and called on the international lesbian and gay communities to back the event with participants and funding.²³⁵ The public response to the advertisements in the main Vancouver newspapers was telling. Letters to the editors were overwhelmingly opposed to the advertisements and *The Vancouver Sun* issued an official apology. Negative reactions also came forth from within and without the gay and lesbian community of the Greater Vancouver area. A coalition of lesbians, gay men and supportive 'straights' called Stand Together organised a campaign to combat this fundamentalist negativity. The Consulting Executive Director, Shawn Kelly, commented that "to a large extent these particular ads back-fired and one of the main immediate responses had been "a tremendous outpouring of offers of volunteers and financial support because of them".²³⁶ Kelly was concerned that such fundamentalist groups could raise large amounts of money and support in an effort to stop the Games and reminded readers of the recent setbacks to lesbian and gay rights within the US and the need to take such right-wing opposition seriously.²³⁷

²³⁴ Green, 'Sodomite Invasion Planned for 1990'.

²³⁵ Media release by Celebration '90: Gay Games III and Cultural Festival (undated). Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, Gay Games II folder 21. Kelly confirmed this in his interview, San Francisco, November 1996.

²³⁶ Kelly, quoted in media release by Celebration '90: Gay Games and Cultural Festival (undated) as above.

²³⁷ Kelly, quoted in media release by Celebration '90: Gay Games and Cultural Festival (undated) as above.

Christian fundamentalists, under the leadership of the Reverend Dias, also used the fear of the spread of HIV and AIDS in an effort to stop Gay Games IV from taking place. According to operations manager Roz Quarto, the use of simple homophobia was not acceptable in New York during the time of these Games. However, anti-Games sentiment could be more effectively whipped up through the fear of AIDS.²³⁸ Gay Games IV organisers also instigated a public relations exercise in damage control.

Health Making at the Gay Games

Leaving these anti-gay campaigns aside, the issue of active, productive, creative, communal and healthy recreation being a positive outcome of the Gay Games went well beyond desirable image making. The number of people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide is now in the millions. According to Andriote, nearly two-thirds of the estimated 75,000 gay men living in San Francisco from the start of the epidemic until 1998 had been infected with HIV, diagnosed with or had died from AIDS.²³⁹ An article on AIDS appearing in *The New York Times* on April 26, 1996 reported that ‘despite two world wars, the Depression and epidemics, nothing in this century has affected the life expectancy for New Yorkers as greatly as AIDS’.²⁴⁰ Over 60% of those afflicted were gay and bisexual men.

The Gay Games does provide an impetus for the formation of sports and cultural groups within the gay and lesbian communities from many places throughout the

²³⁸ Interview with Roz Quarto, New York, December 1996.

²³⁹ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, p. 333.

²⁴⁰ David Firestone, ‘Life Span Dips for Men Born in New York: AIDS is the Main Reason for Decline, Report Says,’ *New York Times* (April 27 1996), p. 25.

world. These groups are a focus for people to meet and develop interests, skills and friendships outside of the 'bars and baths'.²⁴¹ Group formation has been an ongoing process, appearing to gain most momentum in the lead up to a Games. Involvement within these groups and participation in the Gay Games as athletes, volunteers, spectators, and organisational leaders has also provided people living with HIV and AIDS enriching experiences, validation, friendships, connectedness within a larger caring community, opportunities for achievement and a context that is not weighted down by the trials and travails of the disease.

Through the use of drugs and self-care regimes many in the developed world who are HIV positive can live for over a decade without serious illness, and those who have developed AIDS are also living much longer and with less debilitation. Pronger interviewed numerous gay men who consciously linked the greater interest gay men have been showing in their physical health and well being, to their raised awareness of the need for good health in the face of the AIDS crisis.²⁴² Taking up regular exercise, a healthy diet and a balanced lifestyle were some of the main health promotion strategies. Besides, life does go on after diagnosis. Larry Sheehan reflects on some of these aspects of the Gay Games:

...the Gay Games movement is a symbol for the gay male community that there are things other than AIDS that are still important in life, there are many

²⁴¹ Brenda Pitts documents this development within the US in her article 'Beyond the Bars: The Development of Leisure-activity Management in the Lesbian and Gay Population in America'. *Leisure Information Quarterly*, vol. 15. no.3 (1988), pp. 4-7. Pitts found that between the years 1976-1981, gay and lesbian sport and leisure organisations were initiated at an average of three per year in the Southern California region. From 1982-1986 organisations were initiated at an accelerated rate of 4.4 per year. Pitts postulated that this rate continued to increase and that there appeared to be similar trends in other American cities as well as in Western Europe and Australia. Whilst lesbians did not frequent bathhouses, many went to bars to drink alcohol and socialise.

²⁴² Pronger, *The Arena of Masculinity: Sport, Homosexuality and the Meaning of Sex*, p. 260. Roger Le Blanc also documents this raised awareness for healthy living in the face of AIDS in 'The "Pink Dollar" in Sport', Unpublished conference paper presented at the Fourth International Congress on Sport Management (October 2-5 1996), Montpellier, France, pp. 5-6.

HIV people and people who are in fact quite intricately involved with the Games Movement and I think it shows that this community will survive and will continue to survive and that it's very multi-faceted.²⁴³

The Gay Games for many of those involved is about celebrating their community.

Roz Quarto participated in softball, representing New York City at Gay Games III.

When interviewed she reflected on the importance of celebration: "You know, we are a community that because of AIDS doesn't celebrate much anymore, and it was pure and total celebration, and nothing will be like that..."²⁴⁴ Gary Reese, Texas based writer, academic and cyclist at Gay Games III and IV, eloquently described the way the Gay Games enabled him, and others, to simultaneously celebrate life and remember the dead. This was ritualised at the ceremonies of Gay Game IV:

They were (the ceremonies) a time to remember the dead and a time to honour the living – to hold both at the same moment. The Games offered a rare chance to simultaneously celebrate our lives and mourn our losses. For once I did not feel the push-pull of trying to do one without the other, as if we have to isolate AIDS and everything it means to us before we can begin to feel good about ourselves and our future.²⁴⁵

Celebration, remembrance, sport and cultural pursuits, socialising, community organisation and support are all potential signs of a vital and healthy community. The Gay Games can exemplify and enliven this vitality.

Personal Stories

²⁴³ Interview with Sheehan.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Quarto.

²⁴⁵ Gary Reese, 'Synchronicity at the Games: Athletics, HIV and AIDS Disabilities' in Lisa Labrecque (ed.), *Unity: A Celebration of Gay Games IV and Stonewall* (San Francisco: Labrecque Publishing, 1994), pp. 78-79.

One of the organisers for Gay Games IV, had become exhausted by the AIDS crisis and turned to the Gay Games to make a positive impact in his community. He was a PWA, had lost his lover to the disease and had spent quite a few years working with AIDS organisations in New York City. Involvement with the Gay Games movement meant a great deal to him because it provided another focus apart from AIDS. In his words:

...it's a way of the gay and lesbian community coming together without the focus being on AIDS, which has been so much the focus for so many years...cos like 80% of the people I knew are dead. I mean it's about life and living and coming together and being proud of who we are and in recognising the contributions we make to society and the fact that we have a valuable role to play....²⁴⁶

An HIV positive athlete who had won the silver in the super heavy weight division of the weight lifting at Gay Games IV in New York felt immense pride in his achievement. James fulfilled a childhood dream of being good at sport. He considered himself a successful man even though he had a disease that was considered by many as very debilitating, even a death sentence. He recalls,

All my life I wanted to be like my brother, I wanted to be like these other men who win. I never won a trophy as a kid, I never got to play sports... What was really wonderful was I came back from the Gay Games, from New York, and I brought my silver medal and I went to see my mother. And she was very sick (*with cancer*) and in a wheelchair and she made my father take her out to the neighbours, and she showed them...so look, my son got these (*medals*) at the Gay Games, my son is the second strongest gay man in the world. Because the person who wins the super heavy weight title at the Games gets the title Strongest Man in the World. So I'm the second strongest gay man in the world and I'm really proud of that, especially since I've been HIV for so long (*thirteen years at the time of the interview*). And the man that beat me is not HIV.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Interview with an organiser of Gay Games IV whose real name is not used here for purposes of privacy and confidentiality.

²⁴⁷ Interview with James, San Francisco, November 1996.

James goes on to discuss how he was told by many people on his HIV positive diagnosis that he was going to die, so he turned to drink and drugs – in his words; “because if I’m gonna die I’m gonna die”. The Games channelled his efforts into proving himself. He wasn’t giving up:

I will not go out quietly. I’m going out with my head up being proud of myself. That’s what the Gay Games mean to me. At the closing ceremony there was this big screen TV in Yankee Stadium and they had a collage of all the sports and they said power and showed me. And all of my friends chanted my name...How many people in the United States get to say that they were a champion on the billboard at Yankee Stadium amongst 60,000 people?²⁴⁸

This quote is also interesting in that it confirms a previous observation that there are many ways in which participants are motivated in their sporting engagement at the Gay Games. James was a white gay male, aged in his early forties, who had grown up living all over the US as a son of a naval officer. His upbringing had been shaped by the traditionally masculine and patriotic central themes of military life. Being overweight and awkward as a child, he described his early sporting experiences in largely negative terms. In his adult life he failed to fit-in in other ways – being gay in a largely hostile world, being large and hairy in a gay male community that valued slim, muscular, hair free and fashion conscious youth.²⁴⁹ His HIV status further alienated him. Training for weight lifting and competing at the Gay Games served to resolve this alienation enabling James to feel an affirmed member of his community.

I interviewed a white Dutch gay male swimmer named Jan, aged in his forties and living in London, who was also HIV positive and had broken a world masters swimming record at the New York Games. He was neither nationalistic nor as

²⁴⁸ Interview with James.

²⁴⁹ The main fashion preference within many gay male communities within Western urban centres is for youthful, muscular, sleek and hairless bodies. There are groups of gay men who do prefer larger, hairy body shapes. The latter are known as ‘bears’.

obviously enthusiastic to prove himself. However, he also expressed great pride in his achievement and a sense of urgency in wanting to be able to achieve again.²⁵⁰ Jan was not the only HIV positive swimmer to break a world masters record at these Games. So did James T. Ballard, a thirty-six year old lawyer from Los Angeles, who broke the 100 metre backstroke record.²⁵¹

The sporting accomplishments of James, Jan and James Ballard demonstrate that being HIV positive doesn't mean incapacitation. A number of athletes who had AIDS also competed at these Games. For instance, Thomas Gehring, a thirty eight year old diver, and long distance runner from San Diego nearly died from AIDS in 1992.²⁵² He then heard about the Gay Games, and through sheer will and some help from medication, regained strength and purpose. Gehring placed sixth in the 35-49 age group of the diving at Gay Games IV. The reporter who interviewed Gehring and other athletes living with AIDS who competed at these Games summed up their motivations:

Gehring was among the several hundred athletes with the AIDS virus who came to New York City this week to compete at the games. Some came to fulfil a competitive dream before their bodies give out. Some came to savor the celebration the way only those with a little time left can. Some came to make a political point, to erase the stereotypical image of emaciated and scarred people with AIDS. Some came just to prove to themselves they still could.²⁵³

Roz Quarto recalls that one of the goals of Gay Games IV was to break down the stereotypes of disease and death that accompanies those with HIV and AIDS:

...here we show people with HIV running, swimming, playing volleyball. Just because you have HIV doesn't mean you become totally incapable or forget

²⁵⁰ Fieldnotes – London, December 1996. Interview with Jan, London, December 1996.

²⁵¹ James C. McKinley Jr. 'Athletes With AIDS Virus Conquering the Challenges' *The New York Times*, Sport section (23 June 1994), p. B12.

²⁵² McKinley Jr, 'Athletes With AIDS Virus Conquering the Challenges', p. B12.

²⁵³ McKinley Jr. 'Athletes With AIDS Virus Conquering the Challenges', p. B12..

about living. It's participating and succeeding in sports at all different levels and I think that this more than anything breaks down stereotypes. It just throws in the face to all those people who think having HIV is a death sentence...²⁵⁴

Positive Images

During Gay Games IV one of the main sponsors - Miller Beer – ran a huge advertisement campaign featuring HIV positive athlete Brent Nicholson Earle. Earle had worked to raise awareness concerning HIV and AIDS and to remember those who had died. He achieved this by running and rollerblading all over the US and Canada.²⁵⁵ For Gay Games III Earle made his way running from the 'Athens' of the Gay Games - San Francisco to Vancouver carrying a rainbow flag. This flag had first been adopted in San Francisco during the early 1980s as a symbol of the diversity of the gay and lesbian community and is now recognised internationally. He named his run the Rainbow Run for the End of AIDS and dedicated it to Tom Waddell and Keith Haring, two gay leaders in athletics and the arts respectively who had been his friends and who had died of AIDS. Earle finished his ultra-marathon at the Opening ceremony of the Vancouver Games. He was essentially the human torch of the Gay Games.

In 1994 Earle and a core group of six skaters rollerskated 4,500 miles, departing from the home of Tom Waddell in San Francisco and crossing eighteen states of the US to the Opening ceremony of Gay Games IV. This ultra-marathon was named The Rainbow Roll for the End of AIDS and its main purpose was "to reach young people

²⁵⁴ Roz Quarto was the Operations Director for Gay Games IV.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Brent Nicholson Earle, New York City, December 1996. Brent competed in the marathon in Gay Games II. He met Tom Waddell before the Games at a meeting in San Francisco as well as in New York City and they established a close friendship.

with a prevention message”.²⁵⁶ The Miller beer campaign featuring Earle appeared on billboards, within magazines and in the Gay Games program throughout the period of the Games.²⁵⁷

Inclusion and Empowerment

Gay Games IV organisers demonstrated their commitment to making this event inclusive of people living with HIV and AIDS in other substantial ways. A committee dedicated to making the games safe, accessible and hospitable to people with different needs including those with “accessibility and mobility problems, neurological disorders, psychological problems, chemical sensitivity, cognitive problems and Persons Living with HIV/AIDS” developed comprehensive policies and procedures.²⁵⁸ Differently abled people, including people living with HIV and AIDS were represented on this committee. HIV/AIDS was one of the disabilities included in the comprehensive policy enabling the inclusion of people with disabilities to partake in Gay Game IV. This policy included the provision of a PWA Resource/Hospitality Centre located in Greenwich Village, and hosted by the main organisations representing people living with HIV and AIDS in New York City.²⁵⁹ Rest areas were also provided at the main Games accreditation centre – The Unity Centre – and at various sports venues and the main ceremonies of the games. Transportation to the ceremonies, ticket requests to sport and cultural events, the provision of wheelchairs,

²⁵⁶ Brent Nicholson Earle, ‘The Rainbow Roll for the End of AIDS’ in Lisa Labrecque (ed.), *Unity: A Celebration of Gay Games IV and Stonewall*, p. 140. Roll is used to denote the use of rollerblades.

²⁵⁷ Interview with Roz Quarto, New York, December 1996.

²⁵⁸ Unity '94, Gay Games IV policy document *Special Needs are Human Needs*. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 2, Series IV, folder 56, 1994.

²⁵⁹ Unity '94, Gay Games IV policy document *Special Needs are Human Needs*. The main organisations involved were People with AIDS Centre, New York and Body Positive.

access to medical and pharmacy services, even crisis intervention, were all employed to support PWA.²⁶⁰

Information and training was given to event venue managers, volunteers and all paid staff concerning disability issues, including how to identify and meet the needs of PWA.²⁶¹ Such needs included an expanded First Aid kit, designated restrooms, reserved shaded areas, designated seating, nourishment and the like. These areas were provided for participants and spectators with disabilities. Staff were instructed that many people with HIV/AIDS were not easy to identify, that most would not need assistance, and that it was best to be attentive and adopt a non-patronising approach. That is, it was considered preferable to ask if help was required rather than rush in.²⁶²

Immigration Waiver for HIV+ Participants

One of the most significant actions to provide inclusivity was the securing of an official waiver on immigration for people with HIV and AIDS being able to enter the US for the purpose of attending the Gay Games in New York. According to US immigration law, a non-US citizen could not enter the United States if they had a “communicable disease of public health significance”. At the time of Gay Games IV this included HIV and AIDS. The female co-President of FGG at this time, Susan Kennedy, along with a number of gay and lesbian lawyers, worked through the State

²⁶⁰ Unity '94, file on Special Needs Gay Games IV, Archived in SFPL, GGA, Box 2, Series IV, Gay Games IV folder 56.

²⁶¹ Janet Weinberg, Chairperson of Committee for People With Disabilities at Gay Games IV, *People With Disabilities Post Gay Games Statement* (Undated 1994). Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 2, Series IV, Gay Games IV folder 56, 1994.

²⁶² Unity '94, Gay Games IV policy document *Special Needs are Human Needs*, p. 3.

and Justice Department and the Health and Human Services Department of the US government to make Gay Games IV a special event. This would enable waivers of excludability to be granted for a thirty-day period. According to Kennedy and another member of FGG that I interviewed – Derek Liekty – the USOC also assisted with these efforts in a gesture of goodwill and with some exchange of information on how best to cater for Olympic athletes who were HIV positive.²⁶³ The Gay Games were seen by the USOC as exemplifying best practice in this area. These developments also marked a distinct thaw in relations between the FGG and the USOC

By March of 1994 the waiver had been granted by the Clinton Administration, a gesture that was viewed by some as a means to improve relations with gay voters who had been disillusioned by Mr. Clinton's backdown on homosexuals in the military and his campaign promise to lift these visa restrictions permanently.²⁶⁴ The waiver was granted for ten days to people with HIV and AIDS coming to New York specifically to participate and spectate at Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival.²⁶⁵ Comprehensive instructions were given to those requiring this waiver in the Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival Athletes Registration Book.²⁶⁶ They needed to organise it with the US Embassy or Consulate in their country, declaring their HIV or AIDS status to government authorities. People not wishing to declare their status to anyone risked deportation if caught. A Gay Games HIV/AIDS advisory committee and Task Force

²⁶³ Interview with Susan Kennedy, San Francisco, November, 1996. Interview with Derek Liekty, Sydney, September 1996. This was remarkable considering the recent history between USOC, SFAA and the FGG. A new Executive Director on USOC and a different approach from the FGG enabled this working together of the two organisations.

²⁶⁴ See Steven Greenhouse 'Visa Ban on HIV-Infected To Be Waived for Gay Games', *The New York Times* (Friday February 25, 1994), The Metro Section, B1.

²⁶⁵ Unity '94, Press release, Gay Games VI, 'US. Justice Department grants ten-day waiver on HIV/AIDS immigration to Gay Games IV participants and spectators', March 23, 1994. Archived in SFPL: FGG, Gay Games IV files – media.

²⁶⁶ Unity '94, 'Gay Games IV Policies' *Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival. Athletes Registration Book* (1994), p.7. Archived in SFPL: FGGAS, Box 2, Series V, folder 10, 1994.

was established to assist with these issues. It included fifty attorneys on call who were prepared to work pro-bono to help any Games participant in need.²⁶⁷ Gay Games organisers also participated in a training session in Washington for immigration officials from twenty of the largest airports within the US.

Inclusion of the Differently Abled at Gay Games V

Overseas visitors with HIV and AIDS attending Gay Games V in Amsterdam in 1998 did not face any immigration difficulties as there were no Government restrictions imposed on them entering the Netherlands. Similar measures in place during Gay Games IV such as the provision of rest rooms, special transportation services, and disability access services were operational during the Amsterdam Games to enable the participation of PWA and HIV.²⁶⁸ The inclusion of a number of less taxing activities such as chess, bridge and billiards were also in part aimed at those wishing to participate but who had impaired health and fitness at the time of the Games. As with Gay Games IV these policies were an integral part of the broader provisions made for people involved with the Games who had “different or special needs”.²⁶⁹ The committee devising and implementing this policy had representation by differently abled people and PWA and HIV.

The political and cultural climate for gays and lesbians in the Netherlands was markedly different from that of North America and especially the US This climate

²⁶⁷ Unity '94, 'Gay Games IV Policies' *Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival. Athletes Registration Book* (1994), p. 7.

²⁶⁸ See Gay Games V Website: <http://www.gaygames.nl/amsterdam/specialneeds/index.html>, accessed May 26, 1998. The policy, procedures and programming outlining the inclusion of people with 'special needs' at Gay Games V is covered on this website in an eight page document.

²⁶⁹ See <http://www.gaygames.nl/amsterdam/specialneeds/index.html>, accessed May 26, 1998.

involved tolerance and reserved acceptance of homosexuality within a society that is relatively sex positive.²⁷⁰ From the beginning of the AIDS breakout in the Netherlands, government, health services and gay community organisations worked together to contain the disease and care for those afflicted.²⁷¹ In consequence the number of people contracting HIV and AIDS was, and continues to be, markedly less than that within the US. There was also a relatively moderate societal reaction to the disease. Within this overall cultural and political context Gay Games V was as inclusive as a large international gay and lesbian sporting and cultural event could be.

HIV and AIDS as Disability Rather Than Contagion and Disease

The fact that the provisions made for PWA and HIV were included as an integral part of overall policy covering the inclusion of participants with disabilities - or different or special needs as they were officially termed - is also telling. In this context HIV and AIDS are defined as different or particular needs that can be met by making arrangements and raising the awareness and understanding of people without these particular needs. As a result the association of HIV/AIDS with disease and particularly contagion are removed. Anti-discrimination law within numerous

²⁷⁰ Reserved acceptance refers to the limits of this acceptance. Acceptance is greatest for monogamous gay and lesbian couples and at its least for those preferring sadomasochism and multiple partners. Sex positiveness is noticeable in cultural attitudes towards the nature and place of sex in everyday life and in the maturation of the young person. In a comparative study on the construction of sexuality and family life within the US and the Netherlands, different parental views toward and treatments of adolescent sexuality were found. Dutch parents tended to 'normalise' adolescent sexuality and include it in family discussions whilst American parents 'dramatised' it, constructing sexuality as dangerous and hence excluded it from the family context. Television within the Netherlands also deals with sexual themes in open and expressive ways. See Amy Schalet., 'Adolescent Sexuality and the Constitution of the Modern Individual in the United States and the Netherlands' *Body and Society*, Sage Publications, London, vol. 6, no. 1 (March 2000), pp. 75-105.

²⁷¹ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement. The Politics of Accommodation', pp. 169-170.

Western countries does recognise HIV/AIDS as a disability – however, societal fear and homophobia cloud this relatively rational categorisation within strong and often prejudicial emotion.²⁷²

Furthermore, the communities directly affected by these issues were empowered to define their needs and participate directly in the formulation of policy and practices enabling their inclusion.²⁷³ This is more representative of the social model of disability, which is concerned with the social, environmental and attitudinal barriers and restrictions that ‘disable’ differently abled people’s involvement in society and leisure, rather than focusing on ‘what is wrong’ with their bodies, minds and immune systems.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, instead of the Gay Games organisation benevolently providing opportunities for the disabled, such inclusion is orchestrated by the differently abled – in conjunction with able-bodied Games organisers and policy makers.

The policies enabling people with special needs to participate in Gay Games IV and Gay Games V were comprehensive. The Amsterdam Games in particular stand out in the scope of their policies to ensure that participants, spectators and volunteers who

²⁷² Within Australia and the US HIV/AIDS is recognised as a disability within anti-discrimination law. See Americans With Disabilities Act (1990) and Australian Federal Disability Discrimination Act (1992). Carolyn Thomas discusses these prejudicial attitudes that cloud perceptions of HIV in ‘The HIV Athlete: Policy, Obligations, and Attitudes’, *Sport Science Review*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1996), pp. 22-25. Homophobia figures strongly in these attitudes, even amongst medical professionals within the US.

²⁷³ Evidence of this involvement is made explicit within the policy documents of Gay Games VI and V: Unity ’94, Gay Games IV policy document *Special Needs are Human Needs*. The main organisations involved were People with AIDS Centre, New York and Body Positive. For Gay games V see Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam 1998, <http://www.gaygames.nl/amsterdam/specialneeds/index.html>, accessed May 26, 1998.

²⁷⁴ See Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 177-180 for a discussion of the differences between the medical and social models of disability. The medical model actually underpinned the first sports organisations and events involving people with disabilities. Sport was viewed as therapeutic.

were 'deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired, wheelchair – crutch – or stick using or had chronic conditions such as HIV/AIDS, diabetes, asthma etc' were made welcome.²⁷⁵ Considerations of accommodation, transportation, the scheduling of sporting events and program provisions to include competitors with a disability, the provision of opportunities within the cultural program for general and specific inclusion of people with a disability, building access issues, interpretation services for deaf people, and Games information in Braille and on cassette or large print for those with impaired vision, were amongst the main provisions enabling the involvement of people with special needs in the Gay Games.²⁷⁶ Due to the large number of deaf or hard of hearing participants at these Games a large pool of interpreters able to sign in the four main sign languages were available on request. All of the major public events and many of the cultural events employed signers and interpreters.²⁷⁷ All sports were open to people with a disability as specific competitions were organised such as wheelchair tennis, dancing, weightlifting, and 10,000 wheeling with the runners.²⁷⁸

Inclusion of people with disabilities had been considered as early as Gay Games II. The Chairperson of the Outreach committees, Lloyd Jenkins, contacted the Pacific Centre and the Centre for Independent Living concerning outreach to the 'physically challenged'.²⁷⁹ These organisations agreed to promote the Gay Games through their

²⁷⁵ Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam 1998, 'Special Needs' Policy Document on Gay Games V Website www.gaygames.nl/amsterdam/specialneeds/index.html. Sourced on 20 June 1998.

²⁷⁶ Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam 1998, 'Special Needs' Policy Document on Gay Games V Website www.gaygames.nl/amsterdam/specialneeds/index.html. Sourced on 20 June 1998.

²⁷⁷ Andrew May, 'Deaf All Together', *The Daily Friendship: The Official Gay Games Newspaper*, No. 5 (Thursday August 6, 1998), p. 7

²⁷⁸ Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam 1998, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p.7. Collected at Gay Games V.

²⁷⁹ Letter from Lloyd Jenkins to Tom Waddell, Shawn Kelly and Hal Herkenhoff – Subject: Sporting Events for the Physically Challenged. Dated April 7, 1986. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box I, Series II, folder 2, 1986.

networks. Games organisers hoped to integrate the ‘physically challenged’ into sporting events where ever possible. This is as far as the inclusion of people with different needs went. It wasn’t until Gay Games IV and V that comprehensive policies and practices for inclusion were put in place.

HIV/AIDS and the Cultural Festival

The Cultural Festival of Gay Games III, IV and V also featured events, performances, screenings and displays concerned with telling stories – from love to persecution. The film festival of Gay Games III opened with the Canadian premieres of two acclaimed films from the US: Oscar winning *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* followed by *Men in Love*. *Common Threads* is a documentary covering a diverse sample of individuals (men, women, children, straight, gay, ethnically diverse) who have died from related illnesses and their families and friends loving account of their lives. These individuals are remembered by their family and friends through a specially prepared quilt patch that is sown onto the ‘Names Project’ quilt containing tens of thousands of panels and many times more individual patches. This quilt memorialises the tens of thousands of Americans that have been killed by AIDS related illness. The films directors, Jeffrey Friedman and Robert Epstein, were at the screening and the function raised money for the Vancouver PWA Coalition.

Men in Love was about a man who “rediscovers himself and his sexuality after his lover dies of AIDS”. At Gay Games IV there was a multi-media display titled *The Invisible Epidemic: Women with AIDS*, a theatre performance *Until*, in which performance artist Patrick Burton compared sexual persecutions during the Holocaust to the AIDS crisis and the increase in gay bashings, and a main stage play titled *Love*

n'Latex. The latter was a multi-media safe sex play for youth and adults. The mile long, 30 foot wide rainbow flag that was unfurled down the main streets of New York City, and the Stonewall marches and celebrations that followed Gay Games IV, also featured themes, politics and remembrance.²⁸⁰ Gay Games V added a whole program of human rights conferences and workshops, some of which touched on AIDS issues. Such cultural responses to AIDS at the Gay Games have grown out of the experiences of those directly affected. As Dennis Altman points out, these cultural performances are both artistic expressions of what has happened as well as activist statements.²⁸¹ The artist wishes to have an impact on how the epidemic “is perceived and regulated”.²⁸² In this context, the Cultural Festival of the Gay Games has provided much more to its communities than a multi-sports event in itself ever could. Michael Clarke’s desire that the Gay Games enlivens the ‘spiritual’ aspects of lesbian and gay life was certainly fulfilled.

HIV/AIDS, the Sports Program and Drug Testing

By 1994 the sports program of the Gay Games had expanded dramatically to over 28 sports and had become more complex. In the drive to gain credibility, respectability and enable gay and lesbian athletes to break mainstream sports records, a number of sports were sanctioned by their respective international and national mainstream sports organisations. Part of this sanctioning involved drug testing. Physique was one of these sports and mandatory drug testing was introduced. Apparently a number of contestants tested positive for drug use during Gay Games IV and 11 medals changed

²⁸⁰ Warren Woodberry Jr. and Sonia Chopra, ‘Collision Course. Activists Defy Ruling, Plan March on Fifth Ave. Today’ *New York Newsday* (Sunday June 26), 1994, p. A7.

²⁸¹ Dennis Altman., *Power and Community*, p. 87.

²⁸² Dennis Altman., *Power and Community*, p. 87.

hands due to disqualification.²⁸³ Random drug testing occurred for the wrestling competition of Gay Games V.

One of the recognised medical treatments for people with HIV is the prescription of steroids to maintain muscle mass and function. Gay Games VI athletes who were using steroids for medical reasons could gain a waiver that enabled them to compete.²⁸⁴ They had to 'supply a letter from their treating physician describing the condition being treated, the relevant treatment regime, duration of treatment, copy of the current prescription, and physician's full name, address and phone number'.²⁸⁵

Participants were reassured that all medical information disclosed would be treated in strict confidence and that all waiver documentation would be destroyed once the judging decisions had been finalised. This drug waiver policy was essential to ensure such special needs were met. The registration booklet for these Games indicates that contestants with HIV could participate in this sport, however, special provisions based on medical use of steroids were not stated.

Drug testing became especially contentious issues in the lead up to the Sydney 2002 Gay Games in the sports of physique and powerlifting. Sydney 2002 had contractual obligations under the FGG Licence Agreement to take a strong stance on having a drug free event, and testing was originally to take place in these two sports. This was a demand of the International Natural Bodybuilding Association (INBA), the

²⁸³ Stuart Borrie, Sydney 2002 Gay Games, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games and Cultural Festival Sports Department Final Report* (March 2003), p. 104. This report was obtained directly from Stuart Borrie, who was the Director of the Sport Department for these Gay Games. It is archived in Victoria University, Sunbury campus (VU), Caroline Symons Gay Games Personal Archive (CSGGPA).

²⁸⁴ Unity '94, Official Rules For The 1994 Gay Games Physique Competition, June 21 (Prejudging) and June 22 (Final) Revised 3/6/94. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 2, Series XII, Folder 17, 1994.

²⁸⁵ Unity '94, Official Rules For The 1994 Gay Games Physique Competition, clause C.

sanctioning organisation for Physique as well as numerous contestants at these Games. Powerlifting was to be sanctioned by the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF). Both INBA and IPF had no mechanism to assess therapeutic substance use by athletes. Under the IPF rules those on “medication containing banned substances and who knowingly compete have already committed a doping offence”.²⁸⁶ Because a suitable legal framework could not be reached for drug testing in physique – one that protected Sydney 2002, the Australian Sport Drug Agency (ASDA) and the rights of the athletes competing in this event – drug testing did not occur. It went ahead in Powerlifting after a long and protracted period of negotiations, and people living with HIV who used steroids for therapeutic purposes were essentially excluded.

The Director of the Sports Department for these Gay Games, Stuart Borrie, questioned the very basis of drug testing at a mass participatory and inclusive event such as the Gay Games. He points out that:

It leads to the very heart of one of the principles of the Games – that of ‘inclusion’. The Gay Games is one of the few mass participatory sports events (and there are hundreds worldwide) which sanction drug testing. The act of drug testing in our event excludes certain categories of people from participating.²⁸⁷

A very similar mass participatory multi-sports event that took place one month before the Sydney 2002 Gay Games, the World Masters Games held in Melbourne, held no drug testing. The FGG appears to be the driving force behind this push for sanctioning and drug testing at the Gay Games. This is one area where the principles of inclusion

²⁸⁶ Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games and Cultural Festival Sports Department Final Report*, p.

^{106.}
²⁸⁷ Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games and Cultural Festival Sports Department Final Report*, p.
^{106.}

and participation are being undermined by the desire for sanctioning and legitimacy. Furthermore, the complexity and legality of policy making in this area adds another significant organisational burden upon the Gay Games host. As the Games manager directly responsible for the anti-doping policy negotiations and arrangements, Borrie questioned their relevance and worth within this mass participatory multi-sports event.²⁸⁸

Inclusion at the Community Level

Whilst the interviews and archival sources provide insight into the way that athletes who were HIV positive or had AIDS were treated at the macro level in gay and lesbian sports leagues and the Gay Games, they were relatively superficial in providing insight into everyday relationships within their immediate sporting community. For instance, were athletes living with HIV/AIDS treated any differently? Were there instances of discrimination and ostracism? Were the principles of privacy and confidentiality in relation to an athletes seropositive condition adhered to? Were appropriate precautions taken during training and in the competitive arena to prevent the possible transmission of HIV? James, the HIV positive weight lifter, made reference to an inclusive and supportive environment within his gay American Football team that played in a mainstream recreational league in San Francisco during the 1990s.²⁸⁹ Jan's London (U.K) based swimming club – Out to Swim – appeared to be collectively proud of his world record achievement as an HIV positive athlete.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games and Cultural Festival Sports Department Final Report*, p. 106.
²⁸⁹ Interview with James, San Francisco, November 1996.
²⁹⁰ Diary, London, December 1996.

Rituals of remembrance involving the reading of names of sports club members who had died of AIDS has become commonplace, especially within gay leagues based in the US and in international gay sports organisations. Whilst training with the gay and lesbian swimming club based in San Diego – Different Strokes – I learnt that the primary care teams and supportive friends that had made life comfortable and meaningful to swim club members sick with AIDS had come from this close knit club.²⁹¹ This swimming club also held an annual ‘memorial swim/fundraiser for Bart Hopple, a founding member who died of AIDS related complications.’²⁹²

Negative experiences in which seropositive people have been treated as ‘other’ in some way within their gay and lesbian sports teams were not found during my limited research and life experiences. Anecdotal evidence is obviously inadequate. However, this overall pictures (macro and micro) of mostly humane and respectful treatment of sports-people living with HIV and AIDS within the context of the gay and lesbian sports scene is a positive one.

Problematics

Apart from Gay Games I, organisers of all Gay Games, and the Directors of the FGG, have had to consider carefully the extent that their organisation’s public profile would be taken up by issues having to do with HIV and AIDS. How would they remember important leaders in gay and lesbian sports and the arts that had died of AIDS? How pro-active would they be in HIV/AIDS prevention education? Would they take on the

²⁹¹ Fieldnotes, San Francisco, December 1995 and November 1996.

²⁹² Rina Szwarc., ‘Different Strokes Swim Team Celebrates Ten Years’ in *Gay and Lesbian Times* (Southern California’s weekly) Issue 401 (August 31 1995), pp. 42-43.

role of advocate and expert on HIV/AIDS within the wider context of sport? These are some of the contentious issues that have been raised within these organisations as well as by community members.

Wrestler Gene Dermody was critical of the way the leaders of Gay Games II treated his wrestling club's request that their long serving and well loved coach be remembered in a fitting and public way during the close of the Games. Coach Don Young had competed in the wrestling and won gold at these Games. He had been diagnosed with AIDS not long before the Games and knowing the painful death that lay ahead for him he committed suicide two days before the Games had ended. Dermody commented that the leaders appeared to be at pains to distance themselves and the Games as much as possible from the crisis. Perhaps the leaders thought it more appropriate to remember those dying from AIDS in a collective rather than individual way.

Joe Franco, self identified "Chicano queer person with AIDS" who participated in Gay Games III, was also critical of the way the host organisation and the FGG officially acknowledged the impact of AIDS:

But through the opening ceremony I did not hear one word about the PWA, or people with HIV infection who were an integral part of Gay Games III...In the official program, a memorial page for Tom Waddell mentioned neither AIDS nor death but did say, "In loving memory of those who led the way." Where are they now, I wondered. Why aren't they here?²⁹³

Franco also recalls being treated insensitively at the registration centre during his stint as a volunteer for Gay Games III. He had made a request to the security guard to use

²⁹³ Joe Franco, 'Playing With AIDS' in *Outweek* (September 15 1990), pp. 28-29.

the bathroom right on the registration building closing time. He was suffering from diarrhoea associated with a related gastrointestinal condition. The security guard insisted that he could make no exceptions. This forced Franco to reveal his PWA status: “You would have thought that I had stuck him with one of my suspect HIV infected hypodermic needles the way he jumped away from the door as I made a beeline for the washroom”.²⁹⁴ This incident demonstrates the need to at least brief all staff and volunteers involved with the Gay Games on HIV and AIDS issues - just as disability awareness training would be an integral part of staff and volunteer training for a sport event involving a sizeable disabled population. The actions of HIV/AIDS and disability working parties at subsequent Gay Games were more pro-active in this area.

The fundamentalist Christian campaign to stop Gay Games III appears to have been effective only in as much as it made the organisers very wary of making overt connections with the Games and AIDS. It also appears that the provisions for PWA and HIV were basic, involving the decimation of safe sex information, official remembrances based on the initiative of people like Brent Nicholson-Earle and inclusive statements in some Gay Games information.

In 1990 ACT UP demanded a boycott of the Gay Games that was planned in New York for 1994 on the grounds that the Games were not inclusive of people with HIV/AIDS, people from racial minorities within the US and people from lower socio-economic classes.²⁹⁵ The male co-Chair of the organising committee for these Games

²⁹⁴ Franco, ‘Playing With AIDS’, p. 28.

²⁹⁵ John Hammond, ‘ “Unity ‘94” Theme Set for New York Games. ACT UP Boycott a Bumpy Start’, *New York Native* (December 11 1990).

Tom Cracovia, responded that it was their intention to include all within the Games and on the organising bodies. To the call for diversity, Cracovia responded:

Specifically we would like the community to know that the Board of Directors of Unity '94 is composed of seven men and five women, which includes three people of colour, one woman who is not gay, one member who is a person living with AIDS, and two people who are economically disadvantaged, one of whom does not have a job. We specifically tried to construct our board to be as inclusive as possible. We constituted ourselves as Unity '94 because we are committed in principle and in activity to including all the diverse elements of the lesbian and gay community who have not been traditionally represented in the Gay Games'.²⁹⁶

The author of the article, Hammond, states that ACT UP seemed to show little awareness of how the Gay Games were organised and run. In fact, the New York Games had a plethora of committees and working parties composed of people directly from the lesbian and gay community, including PWA and HIV. These committees covered all aspects of the Games, including outreach and the policies and procedures developed to enable inclusion of this diverse community.²⁹⁷

Lesbian and gay community organisations are usually political, reflecting heightened awareness of the processes of power and marginalisation as well as the diverse intersections and interests coming out of diversity. Roz Quarto and Stuart Borrie commented during their interviews and in conversations, about the internal political workings of the Gay Games. Because of this political divisiveness Quarto considered 'community' within the GLBT context an "oxymoron".²⁹⁸ Borrie referred to his experiences of Gay Games community politics as "a blood sport".²⁹⁹ Both Quarto and

²⁹⁶ Hammond, ' "Unity '94" Theme Set for New York Games. ACT UP Boycott a Bumpy Start'.
²⁹⁷ This picture was clearly painted in the interviews with Gay Games IV organisers, Roz Quarto, Tom Cracovia, Ellen Markovick and Steve Mumby. See diagram for details.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Quarto.

²⁹⁹ Email and phone conversation with Stuart Borrie, July 2, 2003 and September 15, 2003.

Borrie were discussing the overall political nature of the Gay Games as a vast and complex community event. The issues of disability and HIV/AIDS were facets of this politics. ACT UP was one of the political forces contributing to the overall political community process concerning inclusivity within the Gay Games, and HIV/AIDS issues were at the top of its agenda.

Division was apparent amongst the Directors of the FGG concerning the amount of involvement the Gay Games and the Federation should have with HIV/AIDS issues. As co-Chair of the FGG and Breast Cancer Task Force, Brent Nicholson-Earle believes that the FGG should do a great deal more in the area of advocacy and education on prevention, among other issues.³⁰⁰ Others see the Gay Games as quite separate from concerns with AIDS, the most singular position being that the Games are only about sport, normalisation and a positive experience of pride for participants. For them, the Gay Games provide an excellent opportunity for prevention education and as all effective avenues of reduction in AIDS transmission should be pursued – they are an opportunity that should be made the most of. This could be done without distracting from the primary goals of the Gay Games.

Taking these important criticisms of the treatment of HIV/AIDS issues within the Gay Games into account and the increasing trend of the FGG towards sport sanctioning and the use of drug testing, the picture of inclusivity is still predominantly a positive one. How does it compare with the treatment of such issues in mainstream sport?

³⁰⁰ Interview with Brent Nicholson-Earle. Breast cancer is one of the main killers of women, and the incidence of it within the lesbian population is significantly greater than amongst heterosexual women. The latter is attributed to greater number of lesbians who do not have children in comparison with their straight sisters. Gay men as a community group have demonstrated little awareness, let alone concern for this potentially fatal demographic. Lesbians within the FGG extended the brief of the AIDS task force to include women's health concerns such as breast cancer.

The Mainstream Sports World and its General Response to HIV/AIDS

The mainstream sports world appears to have been particularly slow in its dealings with the issue of HIV and AIDS.³⁰¹ At the time Greg Louganis tested positive for the HIV virus in 1987, there was no policy in place to deal with athletes living with HIV.³⁰² It took the much publicised announcement by Magic Johnson in 1991 of his HIV positive status, followed by tennis champion Arthur Ashe's announcement in 1992 that he had AIDS, for there to be limited public discussion of the need to take the potential of this disease amongst athletes more seriously.

Numerous sports researchers have attributed this slowness largely to the homophobia that permeates the cultures of mainstream sports.³⁰³ Because HIV/AIDS has been so strongly associated with gay men – rather than being attributed to specific at risk behaviours involving contact with infected body fluids – there is an automatic presumption that an athlete living with this disease is probably homosexual. Both Magic Johnson and Arthur Ashe had to stress and in essence 'defend' their heterosexuality and hence normality, during media interviews that followed the revelation of their respective HIV/AIDS status.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Michael Messner, 'Homophobia, and Sports' in Michael Messner and Donald Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sports*, (Freedom CA, The Crossing Press, 1994), pp. 120-127. Deborah Keyser, 'Living With HIV/AIDS: The Voices of Sports Professionals', in G. Sankaran, K. Volkwein and D. Bonsall, (eds) *HIV/AIDS in Sport. Impacts, Issues and Challenges* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics, 1999), pp. 60-61.

³⁰² Keyser, 'Living With HIV/AIDS: The Voices of Sports Professionals', pp. 60-61.

³⁰³ Messner, 'Homophobia, and Sports', pp. 120-124; Keyser, 'Living With HIV/AIDS: The Voices of Sports Professionals'; Carolyn Thomas, 'The HIV Athlete: Policy, Obligation, and Attitudes' *Sport Science Review*, vol. 5. no. 2 (1996), p. 1; D. G. Seltzer, 'Educating Athletes on HIV Disease and AIDS', *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*, vol. 21, no.1, pp. 109-115.

³⁰⁴ Keyser, 'Living With HIV/AIDS: The Voices of Sports Professionals', pp. 57-59 and 62-64.

This homophobia is well demonstrated in an interview Magic Johnson recorded with a live audience for US television. During this interview Arsenio Hall asked Magic how he contracted the disease. Johnson responded that he was not gay and the audience spontaneously applauded.³⁰⁵ He received sympathy from the audience because he was not gay. In fact, Johnson's popularity and his commercial value were not diminished by his HIV revelation. This was due in part to the great respect that many sports fans had for his extraordinary athletic ability. It can also be attributed to Johnson's 'skilful presentation of his acquisition of the HIV virus as an unfortunate result of too much heterosexual manliness'.³⁰⁶

Champion tennis player Martina Navratilova made a more poignant observation concerning the way Johnson was popularly viewed because of his heterosexual exploits. She highlighted the sexed and gendered politics of the American sports world in her comments to the *New York Post* on Wednesday 20 November 1991:

If I had the AIDS virus, would people be understanding? No, Because they'd say I'm gay... That's why they're accepting it with him, because he supposedly got it through heterosexual contact. There have been other athletes who died from AIDS, and they were pushed aside because they either got it from drugs or they were gay. If it happened to a heterosexual woman who had been with one hundred or two hundred men, they'd call her a whore and a slut, and the corporations would drop her like a lead balloon.³⁰⁷

When it comes to sexuality and AIDS women and gay men are treated very differently from heterosexual sportsmen.

³⁰⁵ Messner, 'Homophobia, and Sports', pp. 120-124.

³⁰⁶ Messner, 'Homophobia, and Sports', p. 123.

³⁰⁷ Martina Navratilova, *New York Post* (Wednesday 20 November 1991), p. 54.

Dworkin and Wachs analysed the mediatisation and sexual policing of HIV positive athletes including Johnson, boxer Tommy Morrison and diver Greg Louganis.³⁰⁸ They found common themes within the media reporting of Morrison and Johnson's HIV positive status. First there was surprise at how these heterosexual masculine sport heroes could have been polluted by this disease. Sexual relations with hundreds – thousands of “sexually aggressive female groupies” was the reported cause, placing the blame on ‘immoral’ women. The mythology of working class (Morrison) and African American male (Johnson) hyper-sexuality and lack of control, were also operative in this mediatisation.³⁰⁹ Both Johnson and Morrison are also redeemed – ‘boys will be boys’ - their recklessness being one of the spoils of the masculine sports world.

Contrasting this was the response to Louganis. The media failed to discuss Louganis's long-term relationship. The explanation for his contraction of HIV was automatically conflated with his homosexuality – as if this was inevitable for homosexual men.

Dworkin and Wachs point out that the larger discourse being reinforced is one that privileges heterosexuality, sets up homosexuality as deviant and immoral and that polices sexuality itself by framing heterosexual marriage and monogamy as safe and homosexuality, promiscuity and casual sex as dangerous.³¹⁰ Furthermore, sexual identities, and not acts, are reaffirmed as the main indicators of contracting the disease – a disease viewed as a plague and God's punishment.

³⁰⁸ Shari Dworkin and Faye Wachs, ‘ “Disciplining the Body?”: HIV-Positive Male Athletes, Media Surveillance, and the Policing of Sexuality’ *Sociology of Sport Journal* vol.15, no 1 (1998), pp. 1-20.

³⁰⁹ Dworkin and Wachs, ‘ “Disciplining the Body?”’, pp. 10-11.

³¹⁰ Dworkin and Wachs, ‘ “Disciplining the Body?”’, pp. 13-14.

Michael Burke ties these themes of hegemonic masculinity, homophobia, health, HIV, and sport together by looking at how HIV confronts male sport itself as well as athletes.³¹¹ He discusses the strong association of sport with health, especially at the elite level. The athletic body – an exemplar of physical excellence and self-control, often represents health. This contrasts with the metaphoric presentation of HIV – as sick, contagious, incapable of moral and bodily control, and awaiting an imminent death. One of the emotive solutions to the possible and ‘polluting’ presence of HIV positive athletes, especially within contact sports, has been the call for compulsory HIV testing of all players and the banning of those found to be HIV positive.³¹² The medically endorsed response has been the implementation of ‘blood rules’ on the field, first aid and hygiene procedures designed to prevent contamination and cross infection, the education of athletes and sports personnel, as well as safe sex.³¹³ Medical experts have actually calculated the chances of contracting HIV on the sports field – this risk being infinitesimal.³¹⁴

Burke points out that there are other, more significant, but accepted – even celebrated – risks to health within the realm of male contact sports that do not get scutinised.³¹⁵ For instance, masculine contact sports present an environment where pain and suffering is ‘all part of the game’ and where violence, aggression and their

³¹¹ Michael Burke, ‘Can Sport Cope with a “Wimpy Virus”? Using Questions Not Asked in the HIV and AIDS Sport Discourse to Resist Discrimination’ *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* vol. 29, no.1 (Champaign, Illinois, 2002), pp. 54-65.

³¹² See for instance M. Sutliff and K. Freeland, ‘Limits of Confidentiality Testing and Disclosure with HIV-infected Sports Participants Engaging in Contact Sports: Legal and Ethical Implications’, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (November 1995), pp. 415-429 for evidence of these fears and concerns within contact sports within the US.

³¹³ See Australian Sports Medicine Federation, ‘Infectious Diseases Policy: With Particular Reference to HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis B (1991); Thomas, ‘The HIV Athlete: Policy, Obligation, and Attitudes’, p. 13.

³¹⁴ Thomas, ‘The HIV Athlete: Policy, Obligation, and Attitudes’, p. 25. The risk is considered as virtually non-existent.

³¹⁵ Burke, ‘Can Sport Cope with a “Wimpy Virus”? pp. 56-57.

consequences – injuries - are a badge of honour for a game well played. Domination and violent physicality on the field can demonstrate the so called virtues of hegemonic masculinity. Burke goes on to ask some important questions concerning the potentially unhealthy and risky practices that are an integral part of some of the more aggressive, even violent, male contact sports:

why are we more concerned with whether Tommy Morrison, the heavyweight boxer who has tested positive for HIV, should or shouldn't be allowed to continue to box, rather than whether boxing should be reformed to minimise blood flow by reducing/eliminating blows to the head? Should middle linebackers and defensive linemen in gridiron be able to hit the quarterback with the ferocity they currently do? Why, in an era of HIV, has basketball appeared to get rougher, more physical and with more fighting between teams?³¹⁶

Or to ask in another way – why have not the more violent practices within these sports been ruled out to create a more 'healthy' sports environment that also minimises the risks of HIV transmission, and allows for the full and unproblematic inclusion of athletes living with HIV? Burke believes that these questions are never asked because the risks of violence and injury on the sports field elicit heroic celebrations of masculinity, whilst the risk of HIV infection is antithetical to this.

Burke also discusses the metaphoric construction of heterosexual masculinity within the masculine sports arena.³¹⁷ Sporting heroes such as Magic Johnson are considered exemplars of this masculinity on and off the sports field. Sexual relations and conquests with admiring female fans are some of the accepted perks of male elite sport stardom. Burke posits this aspect of the elite masculine sports world as offering greater risks for HIV infection than the presence of HIV positive players in sport itself.

³¹⁶ Burke, 'Can Sport Cope with a "Wimpy Virus"?'
³¹⁷ Burke, 'Can Sport Cope with a "Wimpy Virus"?' pp. 57-58.

This is another realm of the masculine sports world that receives little internal questioning. This is because it is another risk that demonstrates hegemonic masculinity through the most celebrated sports. Burke concludes that “in the maintenance of these symbols of sport, health, masculinity, male heterosexual sexuality and athletic heroism, the HIV sufferer undergoes a pain additional to the pain of the disease” – that of exclusion and erasure.³¹⁸ The main cause of this exclusion is the fear of being associated with homosexuality and of contracting a potentially fatal disease:

How do these discourses and practices of masculinity, sexuality, HIV and AIDS sport get played out in real life contexts? HIV causes fear. There is the fear of being tainted with the stigma of homosexuality (whether gay, closeted gay or straight). There is widespread ignorance and consequent fear over the real risk in contracting HIV on the sports field. And there is the fear that is generated by a potentially deadly disease. Hence, many athletes and sports personnel have responded emotionally rather than rationally and justly to this health issue in sport.³¹⁹

Messner points out that in order to deal with this important health issue amongst athletes the sports establishment would have to confront this homophobia.³²⁰ This would involve the development of policies, procedures and education programs that address disease prevention on and of the field, issues of privacy, confidentiality and the rights and obligations of all sports personnel. The first step in this process would involve the exploration and challenging of prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes. While many sports have policies and procedures in place on the prevention of infection from blood borne diseases, prejudice still appears to create a rather chilly climate for HIV positive athletes.³²¹

³¹⁸ Burke, ‘Can Sport Cope with a “Wimpy Virus”?’ pp. 63-64.

³¹⁹ Thomas, ‘The HIV Athlete: Policy, Obligation, and Attitudes’, pp. 22-24.

³²⁰ Messner, ‘Homophobia, and Sports’, pp. 120-121.

³²¹ Thomas, ‘The HIV Athlete: Policy, Obligation, and Attitudes’, pp. 22-24.

A most recent example of the effects of this emotionally charged and prejudicial climate on the participation of HIV positive athletes was demonstrated in the Victorian (Australia) legal discrimination case of Mathew Hall Vs the Victorian Football League (VFL).³²² Mathew Hall was an Australian Rules footballer who declared his HIV positive status on his VFL registration form for the 1998 season. The VFL ruled him ineligible to play due to this medical condition – he was seen as a risk to other players. Still wishing to play Hall lodged a case of discrimination on the part of the VFL with the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission (VEOC). The VEOC ruled that according to state and federal law Mathew had been discriminated against and that the chances of other players being infected with HIV through playing football was estimated by the medical profession as being infinitesimal.³²³

Hall's difficulties in playing with the VFL continued after this ruling as a number of football teams refused to play against Hall's team due to his seropositive status. This was in spite of being provided with rational and quite conclusive information regarding the risks of playing and being infected. Furthermore, comprehensive prevention of transmission strategies were already being practiced in first aid and in the rules of play (blood rule). Hall also faced ongoing and unwelcome interest by the media and he eventually decided the effort to play was not worth it.³²⁴

³²² Administrative Appeals Tribunal of Australia, 'Hall Matthew v Victorian Amateur Football Association' found online: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin...+%22equal%22+and+%22opportunity%22>, dated 27/09/01 at 1.24pm.

³²³ 'Hall Matthew v Victorian Amateur Football Association', p. 6. Epidemiologically the risk was predicted to be 'between 1:6,000, 000,000 and 1:125,000,000 irrespective of whether Matthew Hall is banned' (p. 6).

³²⁴ I heard from one of Matt Halls friends that he was beaten up behind play during a football game – apparently a deliberate ploy to remove him from the game for good.

Rule Modification, HIV/AIDS and the Gay Games

It appears that the contact sports within the Gay Games use the same rules as their mainstream counterparts and that infection prevention and first aid measures are also the same.³²⁵ The questions asked by Burke concerning rule modification to promote greater inclusion of HIV positive participants in these sports do not appear to have been asked. Perhaps they do not have to be in a context where the inclusion of HIV positive participants is encouraged and respected. The infinitesimal risk of contracting HIV on the sports field is perhaps more fully appreciated by a community that is relatively well informed on this disease.

In the sports of ice hockey, rugby and wrestling, competition can be fierce and blood has been known to flow at the Gay Games ice hockey finals. An aggressive on the field masculinity is celebrated within these gay sports. A number of gay men have discussed with me their enjoyment of the physicality and aggressiveness of these sports.³²⁶ They have also been sensitive and aware of HIV issues. One of these gay men was HIV positive. He also recounted his experiences of playing on an inclusive and supportive American football team made up of gay players.³²⁷ For more conclusive patterns to be drawn here more research needs to be done on the relationships between gay masculinity, the playing of contact sports and the inclusion of HIV positive players.

³²⁵ I have based this section on conversations that I had with Stuart Borrie, Director of Sports for Sydney 2002. Stuart had knowledge of the Amsterdam and New York Gay Games as well as Sydney.

³²⁶ Based on conversations with ice hockey and rugby players as well as wrestlers that have participated in the Gay Games.

³²⁷ Interview with (participant) James, 1996.

The Death of Tom Waddell

The Gay Games was affected by the crises in one other significant way. Many of the men who were responsible for organising the first two Gay Games had died by Gay Games III in Vancouver. The loss of these male leaders to their community was incalculable. Tom Waddell was diagnosed with full-blown AIDS a few weeks before Gay Games II. He was hospitalised with pneumocystic pneumonia two weeks before the start of the Games. Waddell checked himself out of hospital – against his doctor’s wishes – to take up his role as Games Chairman and athlete.³²⁸ He competed in the javelin throw and won the gold medal. By the middle of 1987 Waddell’s condition had deteriorated dramatically and on Saturday July 11 he finally succumbed to AIDS.³²⁹

The city of San Francisco honoured him with a public tribute held at the City Hall rotunda. Hundreds attended and moving speeches were made in honour of this gay leader and his remarkable achievements.³³⁰ Barry McDell, chairman of the Vancouver Athletics and Arts Association – the next gay and lesbian organisation to take up the organisation of the third Gay Games – described Tom Waddell as an international hero to thousands of gays and lesbians all over the world. At this tribute Waddell’s wife Sara Lewinstein announced that the USOC had finally officially removed the lien on his house.

³²⁸ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 195.

³²⁹ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 224.

³³⁰ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian*, pp. 228.

Journalist Bill Mandel wrote a glowing tribute to Waddell in the *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, addressed in letterform to his three-year-old daughter Jessica Waddell Lewinstein.³³¹ There are a few passages in this letter that capture the man and his contributions to the world – albeit in laudatory – but also fitting prose. These passages have particular significance for the theme of this chapter:

Tom was a healer. He was a physician, but that was just the beginning. His doctor's drive to cure extended far beyond ills of the body and applied itself to maladies of soul and culture...

Tom was told he had AIDS as even larger throngs of athletes gathered in San Francisco last August for Gay Games II. Aware of the irony, your father tried to keep his diagnosis private, hoping the games would offer an antidote to the dread that was greying the community.

Already thin and pale, your dad marched arm-in-arm with your mother and other organisers of the games as thousands rose and cheered their progress across the green carpet of Kezar. Then Tom stood at the podium, trying to quiet the crowd that wouldn't let him speak for all its applause.

Knowing he faced death, he nevertheless told the audience and the world that the games showed the gay community, as it was – strong, healthy, and positive.

This was always his message: hope, optimism, love and struggle towards the light...

Through his untimely and particular death and his visionary contribution to and leadership of the first Gay Games Tom Waddell has become mythologised, even sanctified. His memory has been kept alive to the gay and lesbian public especially through particular ceremonies of subsequent Gay Games, in the brief histories that accompany promotional material on the FGG and the Games and within the seven quilt panels representing Waddell on the American Names Project Quilt. Tom

³³¹ Bill Mandel, 'With Death of Tom Waddell, a Child Loses Her Dad and S.F. Loses One of Its Best', *San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle* (Sunday July 12, 1987), p. B-3.

Waddell is the only individual to have seven panels of this quilt dedicated to his memory.

Through this mythologising of Waddell the main original principles of the Gay Games that were an important part of his vision – inclusion, participation and doing one's personal best – became well and truly embedded within the central traditions of the Games. Each subsequent Games has enlivened these principles in both unique and traditional ways. People living with HIV and AIDS, whether they have been athletes, artists, volunteers, organisers, officials or spectators have been treated as an important section of the community to be welcomed and included in their participation at the Gay Games.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented the impacts of the AIDS crisis upon the Gay Games. It has also explored the responses and contributions of the people, the policies, the practices and the spin offs of the event itself in the ongoing process of living with this disease. One of the main purposes of the Gay Games was to present a normalising image – gay people played sport, looked and lived similarly to everyone else. By Gay Games II the AIDS crisis had re-pathologised homosexuality. Normalisation was sought in both the image making and in the everyday living of Gay Games participants through an emphasis on 'health producing' sport and culture. The Games were extolled as a healthy enterprise for a number of reasons. For the image-makers these Games demonstrated the multi-faceted and productive nature of gay and lesbian lives, they demonstrated that many gay people were healthy sports people, they

demonstrated the resourcefulness and optimism of the gay and lesbian community even in the face of this medical crisis.

These 'healthy' stories told by the gay and lesbian community about themselves were most important in their healing capacity. The celebration and affirmation of the culture and lives of a people who are experiencing such travails from a devastating disease and a hostile social and political environment is health giving. Confidence, self-esteem enjoyment, optimism, socialising, meaningful recreation - these are all positive outcomes of the Gay Games experience actually described by seropositive and negative Games participants. This affirms Waddell's statement that "the Gay Games were about health, not about AIDS".

The Gay Games has faced a number of campaigns to cast it as only about AIDS and the media has also concentrated its coverage of the Games on the issue. Such campaigns produced a conservative response in the organisers of Gay Games II and III. By the 1990s gay political perspectives concerning AIDS had polarised into radical activism and mainstreaming. Community politics affected the Gay Games and the diversity of gay, lesbian and queer life was unabashedly affirmed during Gay Games IV. From this Games onward policies and practices to ensure the full inclusion of people living with HIV/AIDS were well developed and served as a model for other major sports and cultural events, including the Olympics. This inclusiveness fits well with the Games philosophy of inclusion and participation and is one of the transformative features of the Gay Games.

Ironically, by concentrating on the relationships between AIDS and the Gay Games this chapter has also placed AIDS in the spotlight. The impact of AIDS on gay and lesbian life and politics has been transforming and demanded a fulsome account. But unlike the campaigns of the religious right within North America this concentration on AIDS and the Games has illuminated the impossibility and injustice of reducing a people to a pathology. The organisational efforts of staging a Gay Games, the vitality, creativity and productivity of its participants, and the effort put in to shaping it as an inclusive event are testimony to this.

At its height the AIDS crisis acted to consolidate the Gay Games organisers emphasis on normalisation. Normalisation was sought in both the image making and in the everyday living of Gay Games participants through an emphasis on 'health producing' sport and culture. However, concern with presenting a normal image within the mainstream was overshadowed by the affirmation of gay and lesbian life and culture. Giving a social and psychological boost to a community coping with the ravages of AIDS became more vital and the Gay Games were seen as an excellent vehicle to achieve this.

Chapter 5 Going Global

The Gay Games of the 1990s

Introduction

The Gay Games movement went global in its participation, commercialisation, organisational structure and political impacts during the 1990s. The first two Gay Games were primarily local affairs, with the bulk of participants coming from California, their organisation and funding base was San Francisco, and their international outreach was in its infancy. The Gay Games of 1990 was held outside of the US, in Vancouver, Canada. Participation figures more than doubled at these Games and over 30 nations were represented. The global reach and commercialisation of the Gay Games was most dramatically marked at Gay Games IV in New York City and Gay Games V in Amsterdam. These mega-events made the Gay Games the biggest international gay, lesbian – and newly affiliated community members – bisexual, transgender and queer - event known.

Furthermore, the international Gay Games movement had developed and grown significantly throughout the 1990s to become arguably the largest international gay and lesbian institution.¹ It encompasses sport, recreational and cultural clubs, organisations, sports events, competitions and festivals throughout the world; the international governing body overseeing the continuity of the Gay Games - the Federation of Gay Games (FGG), and the Gay Games themselves.

¹ Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2001), p. 100. Altman also cites the Metropolitan Community Church as the other large international gay and lesbian institution.

This chapter looks critically at the major social, cultural, political and economic shapers of the Gay Games movement during the 1990s, the most prominent being difference and identity politics, commercialisation and globalisation. The Gay Games of the 1990s have contributed to the internationalisation of gay and lesbian identity, culture and politics as well as a lesbian and gay sport and leisure industry. This internationalising process has been complex, enmeshed within larger economic, cultural and political forces. The promotion of human rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) peoples throughout the world has also been a significant feature of the Gay Games since 1994.

In order to organise and fund the Gay Games mega-events of the 1990s, corporate and government endorsement, financial and logistical support was essential. The affluence of the gay consumer was used to sell the Gay Games to corporate sponsors, the national tourism industry and politicians who were impressed by the expected economic impact of such a large event. Commercialisation and consumer capitalism with its cultivation of diverse fashionable lifestyles are obvious in the marketing, promotion, programming and revenue raising of Gay Games IV and V. In a decade of diversity sensitivity and the winning of corporate acceptance, the goal of mainstreaming through the Gay Games centred on normalisation through good consumerism. In other words, “we are here, we are just like you and we have lots of money”!

By the New York Gay Games, concerns for gender normative image making had loosened up and the affirmation of a much more diverse community was more explicit. However, the ‘good’ consumer strategy could be seen to be at odds with the

inclusive goals of the Gay Games. The good consumers being profiled, courted and marketed to were primarily white, middle class gay men, and this was reflected in the promotional material, events, marketing and information networks of the Gay Games. Costs involved in travel, accommodation, registration and event entry were also expensive and exclusionary. Major corporate and government endorsement were also break through achievements of the Gay Games that were staged during the 1990s.

The gay and lesbian community continued to be central to the staging of the Gay Games. In fact the Gay Games of the 1990s were very much community organised, supported and concomitantly politicised events. This ensured that they were rich with tensions, contradictions, challenges and successes. One of the key challenges for the Gay Games of the 1990s has been living up to their guiding principle of community inclusion. Differences within the community had expanded to encompass subjectivities based on the intersections of class, race, ethnicity, gender, gendered social identity (i.e. butch, femme), sex, sexuality, nationality, regionality, politics and ability/disability. The more singular and binary-based identity politics of the 1980s had been superseded. Whilst gay men and lesbians were still the prime movers and participants for the Games, transgender, intersex and queer participants were more vocal and involved. The concerns for gender normativity that marked the first two Gay Games had only minor resonance with this diversity focus of the Games of the 1990s.

The community basis and politics of the Gay Games, combined with their overarching inclusive philosophy, acted to drive the development and implementation of policies and programs designed to foster diversity in Gay Games participation. This included opening events to transgender athletes, actively promoting equal participation of

women, fostering the involvement of people living with AIDS and HIV, providing outreach and financial aid to encourage and enable people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and developing countries to participate in their program.

However, this diverse participation still took place in a largely traditional sports environment. Official sanctioning by mainstream sports bodies was sought by numerous sports held at the 1994 and 1998 Gay Games. This supposedly furthered the legitimization of the Games to gay and lesbian sports enthusiasts and within the mainstream sports world. However, the common ground of standardised and known sports competition and the common guiding philosophy of the Gay Games – inclusion, participation and personal best – also provided the flexible and pluralistic foundation for a variety of participants, sporting sub-cultures and clubs that make up GBLT sport across the globe to take part.

We will now turn to the first Gay Games of the 1990s and the first to be held outside of the US, to see these main themes of internationalisation, commercialisation and difference politics taking shape.

“Celebration ‘90”: Gay Games III and Cultural Festival

The Transitional Games

Introduction

The first Gay Games of the 1990s – Celebration ’90, Gay Games III and Cultural Festival was held in Vancouver, Canada from August 4-11, 1990.² A handful of participants from Vancouver, who had participated in the first Gay Games, had been so inspired that on their return home they formed the Metropolitan Vancouver Athletics and Arts Association (MVA&AA) They organised the Vancouver Gay and Lesbian Summer Games. This became an annual event, growing into ‘one of the largest regional competitions on the West Coast ’of Canada.’³ MVA&AA began their bid for the 1990 Gay Games in the spring of 1985, convincing Tom Waddell and key members of SFAA of the merits of taking the Games to the next stage –holding them in another country and on a greater international scale. The bid consisted of a simple slide show and presentation at Waddell’s home.⁴ There was no formal bidding process at this stage. During the closing ceremony of Gay Games II the Vancouver bidding team, in ritual Olympic fashion, were formally presented with the flag of the Gay Games – an interlocking of three rings – as the official hosts of the 1990 Gay Games.

Vancouver

² MVA&AA, *Celebration ‘90, Official Gay Games III and Cultural Festival Program* (Vancouver, 1990). Archived in San Francisco Public Library (SFPL), Federation of Gay Games Archive (FGGA), Box 1, Series III Gay Games III folder 25, 1990.

³ MVA&AA, *Celebration ’90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival, Business Plan* (1989), p. 1. Archived in SFPF, FGGA, Box 1, Series III, GGII folder 1, 1989.

⁴ Interview with Shawn Kelly, Executive Director (ED) of Gay Games II and Consulting ED of Gay Games III during part of 1989-1990. Interview held in San Francisco, November 1996.

Vancouver was often compared with San Francisco as being the place where many gay Canadians migrated to and called home. According to one of the main gay papers of San Francisco, Vancouver became a popular holiday spot for gays from the US and other countries during the world Expo of 1986.⁵ Its natural beauty certainly rivalled the original source of the Games – tucked away in scenic mountains, bounded by English Bay and the Strait of Georgia, boasting a beautiful and extensive park of gardens, wood trails, an aquarium, zoo, beaches and seven miles of seawall walk.⁶ Vancouver was, and continues to be, a cosmopolitan place, peopled by many ethnic groups. At the time, the Greater Vancouver area had a population of one and a half million, with an estimated 45,000 gay and lesbian residents. The city's gay West End boasted a diverse and tolerant community that were apparently energised by the opportunities and challenges of being at the centre of this important international gay and lesbian event.⁷

However, rural pockets of the province in which Vancouver was situated - British Columbia – were not so tolerant or cosmopolitan. In 1989 a vocal segment of the large Christian fundamentalist population living in these regions had waged a vigorous and acrimonious public campaign to shut down Gay Games III.⁸

Vancouver's Director of Health had to mount an information campaign to counter homophobic attempts to link the Games with the spread of AIDS. However, the influence of Christian fundamentalism upon the general thrust of politics at the

⁵ Jack Murphy, 'Vancouver's Personal Best. Lesbian and Gay Athletes Gear Up for Gay Games III', *San Francisco Sentinel* (August 26, 1988), p. 15.

⁶ David King (Celebration '90 newsletter editor) MVA&AA, *Celebration '90 Official Press Kit No.1, March, 1989. Revised: October 31, (1989)*, p. 20. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, GGII folder 19, 1989.

⁷ King, MVA&AA, *Official Press Kit No.1, March, 1989* p. 20.

⁸ See pp. 198-201 of this thesis for full details of the nature of this campaign.

National Government level (and within Vancouver) appears to have been less significant than the influence wielded by the religious right within the US during the 1980s and early 1990s.⁹ For example, in 1969 the federal Parliament of Canada decriminalised homosexuality.¹⁰ Gay and lesbian activism within the nationalist movement in Quebec resulted in the inclusion of 'sexual orientation' to the provincial governments human rights code during the late 1970s.¹¹ By the 1990s, eight of Canada's ten provinces had added 'sexual orientation' to their human rights codes, bringing Canada in line with gay rights provisions of the European Union, Australia and New Zealand.¹² By Gay Games III there were no restrictive immigration laws that challenged the entry of gays and lesbians, or people who were HIV positive.¹³

Setting the Scene

The lesbian and gay community of Vancouver certainly had their work cut out for them – Gay Games III and Cultural Festival turned out to be the largest sports and cultural event held in the world that year.¹⁴ It was the largest international gay and lesbian event of its time – with over twice as many competitors as Gay Games II, who came from 30 countries. Of the 7,250 registered athletes, 4,821 came from the US and nearly half of these American participants were from California, which is consistent with past Gay Games involvement.¹⁵ However, participant numbers from other main

⁹ Barry Adam, 'Moral Regulation and the Disintegrating Canadian State', in B. Adam, J. Duyvendak and A. Krouwel, *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics. National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999) pp. 16-17.

¹⁰ Adam, 'Moral Regulation and the Disintegrating Canadian State', pp. 12-13.

¹¹ Adam, 'Moral Regulation and the Disintegrating Canadian State', p. 14.

¹² Adam, 'Moral Regulation and the Disintegrating Canadian State', p. 16.

¹³ Adam, 'Moral Regulation and the Disintegrating Canadian State', pp. 14-16.

¹⁴ Stephen Brunt, 'In the Gay '90s, the Name of the Games is Pride'. *The Globe and Mail*, (August 4, 1990). (This is Canada's national newspaper)

¹⁵ 'Gay Games 1990, Vancouver. For Gay and Lesbian Athletes, It's a New Way to Play the Game', *Advocate* (August 14, 1990), p. 30.

cosmopolitan and gay tolerant cities of the west did increase significantly at these Gay Games.

Sports and Culture

The Games program included the 17 sports already established from the previous Gay Games and 11 newly introduced sports: water polo, race walking, ice hockey, equestrian, golf, darts, martial arts, squash, badminton, touch football and croquet.¹⁶

Men and women could enter all of these events with the exception of wrestling, which was for men only. Women made up 43% of participants –a measure of the Games efforts to achieve gender parity. For the first time in Gay Games the international swimming body – Federation Internationale Natation Association (FINA), officially sanctioned the swimming competition.

In the lead up to the Games discussions involving organisers and the local community determined that the goal of friendly participation would be balanced with the desire of gay and lesbian competitors for ‘the recognition often denied them in traditional sport’.¹⁷ While the traditional awarding of medals for top placings continued, each participant received a participation medal.¹⁸

¹⁶ King, MVA&AA (Celebration '90 newsletter editor) *Official Press Kit No.1, March 1989*. Revised: October 31, 1989, p. 11.

¹⁷ King, MVA&AA, *Official Press Kit No.1, March 1989*.. Local community discussion of these goals occurred at the October 1988 planning conference. See MVA&AA's *Celebration '90 Newsletter*, dated (November-December 1988), p.1. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, GGIII folder 1, 1988.

¹⁸ King, MVA&AA, *Official Press Kit No.1, March 1989*.

The Cultural Festival of the Gay Games had come into its own with an extensive program involving 1,500 artists and encompassing film, theatre, music, comedy, literature, visual arts and dance.¹⁹ The majority of Cultural Festival participants were grass roots community performers along with a smattering of well-known gay and lesbian celebrities. GAYLA! A Celebration of Women's Culture featured an evening of women's culture in music, song and comedy. Gay Choruses and the Lesbian and Gay Bands of America (LGBA) featured strongly in the music program. Canada's largest get together of gay and lesbian writers was at the Cultural Festival's Words Without Borders Literary Gathering. Actors from Canada, Australia and the US performed six plays with gay and lesbians themes in the Theatre festival. An Oscar winning documentary film on AIDS , *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* premiered in Canada on the opening night of Gay Games III nine-day film festivals. Visual Arts exhibitions of paintings, drawings, photographs and sculpture by lesbian and gay artists from Vancouver and New York were displayed in four of the main local art galleries.

Dancing was also very well catered for at these Games. Twelve modern performance pieces were included in the Cultural Festival's Danc celebrations! and all Gay Games participants, volunteers, organisers, spectators and friends could dance the nights away at the Celebration Centre. This Centre, situated in downtown Vancouver, was the central hub of the Games, housing the information and registration centre as well as discotheque, beer and wine gardens, artisans fair, food and entertainment areas.

¹⁹ King, MVA&AA, *Official Press Kit No.1, March 1989*, p. 12. See MVA&AA, *Celebration '90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival Official Program*, pp. 42-56 for full coverage of the Cultural Festival program.

Commercialisation, Sponsorship and Funding

The Gay Games budget had grown from \$500,000 (US) dollars to just over 2 million US dollars, and the cultivation of the supposedly lucrative pink dollar was actively pursued. This is evidenced in the Corporate Sponsorship Fulfilment Program planned and implemented by the Gay Games III Board of management.²⁰ This program sought to sell major sponsorship to 10 major corporations. Using one of the very first pieces of market research on the gay community within the US, which was carried out by the Simmons Market Research Bureau during 1988, the program cited the consumer demographics of the gay and lesbian population thus:

Gays are affluent. Gay men and lesbians have a higher standard of living than most people. The North American gay community, while comprising about 10% of the population, controls about 20% of the population's disposable income. They have a lower rate of unemployment and a higher level of education....²¹

The 1990s marketing - and normalisation - ploy of 'gays as good consumers' started with these Gay Games. From this time onward gay and lesbian markets were being promoted to the commercial mainstream, especially within North America. Gay media and marketing companies began to point out that gay men and lesbians were an affluent and desirable market to reach. Consumption patterns included frequent dining out, travelling, purchasing of music, books, using credit cards more often, and generally enjoying the 'good life'. Gays and lesbians were portrayed as the models,

²⁰ MVA&AA, Celebration '90: Gay Games III & Cultural Festival, *Corporate Sponsorship Fulfilment Program*, undated – Looks like it was put together in 1989 and endorsed by the Board of Management. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, Gay Games III folder 15, 1989.

²¹ MVA&AA, Celebration '90: Gay Games III & Cultural Festival, *Corporate Sponsorship Fulfilment Program*. See Dan Baker, 'A History in Ads. The Growth of the Gay and Lesbian Market' in Gluckman and Reed (eds) *Homo Economics. Capitalism, Community and Lesbian and Gay Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 12-14.

even the fashion-leading citizens, of consumer driven society. They were also thought to be loyal consumers – a pattern attributed to the fact that they had been ignored for so long. Gay people were a new consumer niche and their identity making reflected this. The commercialisation of the Gay Games that becomes well developed during Gay Games IV and V actually takes off with Vancouver.

A commercial gay world of leisure and service industries, centred on hospitality, travel, sex, health and fitness, fashion, dance clubs, book shops as well as community (gay) media, existed in many of the cities with large gay and lesbian population within the US, Canada, Australia, Northern Europe and England during the 1980s.²² Gay men especially made and re-affirmed their gayness through their engagement with this gay world and the conspicuous consumption of its products and services. Cultivation of a youthful, fit, smooth, defined and muscular body through regular exercise in the gym, pool and to a lesser extent – the team sports field – has been keenly taken up by many gay men, producing what is referred to as the ‘Template Man’.²³

Lesbian consumers have been less conspicuous, although the public consumption of glamorous ‘lesbian chic’ during the 1990s may indicate a shift in this identity making for the more fashion conscious, and perhaps less politicised part of the lesbian

²² Dennis Altman, *The Homosexualisation of America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

²³ Dean Kiley, a commentator on gay life in Australia coined the term ‘Template Man’ to describe this most popular look amongst many gay men during the 1990s. See Dean Kiley, ‘Coming Over All Queer: Theory, Aging and Embodiment Problematic’, *Antithesis*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1995), pp. 75-103. Also see Roger Le Blanc, ‘The ‘Pink Dollar’ in sport’, unpublished paper presented at the Fourth International Congress on Sport Management, Montpellier, France (October 2-5, 1996), for a summary of the growth of the fitness industry during this period and its use amongst gays and lesbians within the US, Australia and New Zealand.

community.²⁴ According to Le Blanc, lesbians have also pursued the body beautiful through exercise and weight training.²⁵ Pitts also documents the significant growth of the lesbian and gay sports industry, particularly within North America over the 1980s and 90s. She attributes this growth to an increase in health consciousness and the enjoyment of sports and fitness pursuits within socially positive and safe gay and lesbian specific environments, as well as the influence of the Gay Games.²⁶

A number of bodies fit this desired image, including the slender and fit body and the muscularised, strong, butch body that is celebrated in Gay Games events such as bodybuilding, power lifting and rugby.²⁷ As Hargreaves points out: “in all the Gay Games activities, the body is conspicuously celebrated”.²⁸ This is most evident in the sport program where strong, muscular, fit, built, dynamic, desirable, eroticised, fashionable, adorned bodies perform, interact, are gazed upon and consumed by participants and spectators, and also displayed as the focus of advertising.

The most valuable target market that was promoted was the high earning, white, urban, professional gay male. Promotional material and advertisements used during

²⁴ See Dianne Hamer and Belinda Budge (eds), *The Good, the Bad and the Gorgeous. Popular Culture's Romance with Lesbianism*, (London: Pandora, 1994) for an insightful analysis of ‘lesbian chic’ during the 1990s. Hamer and Budge note that popular cultures romance with lesbianism is based on a dualism – “the bad political lesbian who was anti-men, anti-sex and anti-fashion, versus the new brand of 1990s lesbian, gorgeous, glamorous, and like any other good fashion accessory, devoid of political meaning” (p. 11).

²⁵ Roger Le Blanc, ‘The “Pink Dollar” in sport’, pp. 7-8.

²⁶ Brenda Pitts, ‘Beyond the Bars: The Development of Leisure Activity Management in the Lesbian and Gay Population in America’. *Leisure Information Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 3 (1988), pp. 4-7.

Pitts, ‘Leagues of Their Own: Growth and Development of Sport and Sport Management in the Lesbian and Gay Population in the United States: 1970s – 1990’s’ Paper presented at the annual conference of the North American Society for Sport Management, Athens, GA (June 1995). Pitts, ‘From Leagues of Their Own to An Industry of Their Own: The Emerging Lesbian Sports Industry’, *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Autumn 1997), pp. 109-141.

²⁷ Jennifer Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 167.

²⁸ Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 167.

the Vancouver Games display this trend, although the domination of ‘template’ man becomes more obvious with Gay Games IV and V. Some critical commentators of this definition of gayness – which through extensive usage becomes widespread and normalising – point out its exclusionary capacity. For instance, Gluckman and Reed observe that:

Lesbians and gay men who do not see themselves in the Ikea spots or Dewar’s ads feel alienated. Perhaps more importantly, gay politics now reflects this divide, and a growing chorus of conservative gay writers is calling for gay activism to separate itself from any broader progressive vision that might address the needs and interests of the less visible, less privileged members of the gay community.²⁹

The less privileged members of the gay and lesbian community can feel excluded and alienated by this commercial marketing and normalisation of affluent gay men.

There have been other significant political ramifications to this narrowly constructed identity of the affluent gay consumer. The religious right in the US have successfully used these marketing statistics to portray gay men and lesbians as a privileged group undeserving of civil rights protection.³⁰ According to Gluckman and Reed, this widely used marketing ploy has alienated African American gays and lesbians even further from the rest of the gay community. Accordingly, gays appear “affluent and indifferent to racism”.³¹

Such critique did occur during Gay Game III. According to Shawn Syms, a feature journalist on Gay Games III writing in Vancouver’s more radical gay and lesbian

²⁹ A. Gluckman and B. Reed, ‘The Gay Marketing Moment’, p. 6.

³⁰ For instance this data was used in the successful campaign by the religious right to rill back civil rights protection for lesbians and gay men in Colorado in 1992. They were also used in the religious rights case against the Federal Employment Non-discrimination Act of 1994 – see Gluckam and Reed, ‘The Gay Marketing Moment’, p. 6.

³¹ Gluckman and Reed, ‘The Gay Marketing Moment’, p. 8.

newspaper *Rites*, there were race and cultural biases in the Words Without Borders, Lesbian and Gay Literary Festival held as part of the Games Cultural Festival.³² These biases caused “much tension and controversy” between the white, middle class, gay male event organisers and the writers attending the festival, especially a group of “women writers of colour”.³³ In a petition these writers ‘made numerous complaints including the expensive nature of the writers festival and other aspects of the Gay Games, which they deemed exclusionary for many. They were also concerned about the significant ‘over representation’ of white writers on official writers festival panels.

With a projected Gay Games III budget of over \$1.5 million (US), and very little funding coming from government sources, appealing to sponsors through the use of these affluent consumer demographics was a necessity. This research was viewed in a most optimistic light as providing strong evidence of a potentially lucrative and loyal market to prospective sponsors. However, the fact that no major sponsor signed up with Gay Games III may indicate that there was still considerable nervousness amongst mainstream companies to sponsor the event.³⁴ It is likely that the very public anti Games campaign of the Christian fundamentalists would not have helped Games organisers efforts to secure such sponsorship.

The demonstration of government endorsement for the Games in financial terms was also minimal. The much smaller British Columbia Seniors Games, which was held in September 1990, received \$70,000 (Canadian) from the Provincial Government; and the World Police and Fire Games, which was also held in the province that year,

³² Shawn Syms, ‘Celebration ’90. Physique and Critique’. *Rites* (September 1990), Vancouver, p. 11.

³³ Syms, ‘Celebration ’90. Physique and Critique’, p. 11.

³⁴ The most significant sponsors, Molson Brewery sponsored the event with US \$ 5,000.

secured \$150,000 (Canadian) in lottery and government funding. Celebration '90 worked tirelessly to secure a mere \$45,000 (Canadian) from the federal government Department of Communications in Ottawa.³⁵

The much greater participation figures and economic impact of Gay Games III compared to these other largely volunteer organised multi-sports events did not convince government representatives of the value of providing tax payer funded support to this peak gay and lesbian event.³⁶ Writing about Gay Games III in Canada's national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, Stephen Brunt reflected on this lack of funding in different terms:

...there is an enormous sense of pride and accomplishment among those associated with the event. Operating on a budget of just under \$2-million (a pittance by Olympic standards) and with less than \$100,000 in government money (including \$0 from Bill Vander Zalm's provincial government), they are about to pull off a sport and cultural festival that will bring 10,000 people to Vancouver. Seven charter flights were scheduled to land in the city from all parts of the globe and local hotels are full.³⁷

Games organisers had to rely on registration fees, admissions, private fund raising and minor corporate sponsorship primarily from gay owned and targeted companies.³⁸

The final Gay Games III budget was \$90,000 (Canadian) or \$76,452 (US) in deficit.³⁹

Vancouver's hospitality and tourism industries did much better financially out of the

³⁵ MVA&AA, Letter to Mr. Gordon Price, Alderman, Vancouver, from Bill Amundson, Director on Board of Management, Celebration '90 and Treasurer of the Games. Dated August 24, 1990. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, Gay Games III folder 8, 1990. Evidence of this is also cited in Stephen Brunt, 'In the Gay '90s, The Name of the Games is Pride'. 1990 Canadian dollar values are given here. The conversion to US dollars (based on the rate given on 29 December 2003) is \$53,367, \$114,358 and \$34,307 respectively.

³⁶ Ambudsman estimated the economic impact of 20,000 people visiting Vancouver for the one-week duration of the Games was over \$20 million (US).

³⁷ Brunt is quoting the registration figures for sport and cultural participants of Celebration '90, as well as the volunteers and organisers. The overall visitor figures for these Gay Games would have been larger when factoring in partners and other spectators that were not officially registered.

³⁸ MVA&AA, 'Fact Sheet: Celebration '90: Gay Games III and Cultural Festival'. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series 111, GGIII folder, 1, 1990.

Games. Headlines in two local papers captured this brisk business with ‘Gay Gamers are big spenders’ appearing in *The Province* and ‘Games tripled sales at shop, manager says in *The Weekend Sun*.⁴⁰ The story of lucrative gay markets and friendly straight local businesses and services is well told in these articles.

Government Support

While direct financial support was lacking, the local government within Vancouver supported the Gay Games in other ways, including the provision of 5,000 free transport passes for athletes during the Games week and the creation of a special Games liaison unit within the Vancouver Police Department.⁴¹ Leading figures in Canadian society and sport also gave their legitimating authority and learned advice to the Games. For instance, the Honorary Board of Directors of Gay Games III included the Leader of the Opposition of the Canadian Federal Parliament and former Prime Minister of Canada, John Turner, and the Director of the Canadian Olympic Academy and Olympian, Bruce Kidd as well as a number of other high profile elected government representatives spanning the three levels of government in Canada and both of the main political parties.⁴²

³⁹ According to an email letter sent out by the co-Presidents of the FGG on November 28, 2003, titled ‘Dear Gay Games Participants, Friends and Supporters’. This letter set out the deficits of the past four Gay Games (including Sydney 2002 Gay Games) in the FGG’s explanation of the recent and irreversible breakdown in relations between the host for Gay Games VII, Montreal 2006 and the FGG. Archived in CSPGGA, VU.

⁴⁰ Olivia Scott, ‘Gay Games Are Big Spenders’, *The Province* (Thursday August 9, 1990), p. 6. Kevin Griffin, ‘Games Tripled Sales at Shop, Manager Says’, *The Weekend Sun* (Saturday, August 11, 1990), p. 1.

⁴¹ Celebration ’90 spent \$200,000 on public facility rentals so the majority of sport usage was on a user pays basis. Documented in ‘Letter to Mr. Gordon Price, Alderman, Vancouver, from Bill Amundson, Director on BOM, Celebration ’90 and Treasurer of the Games’, (Dated August 24, 1990).

⁴² MVA&AA, Celebration ’90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival, *Official Press Kit No. 1* (March 1989. Revised: October 1989), p. 17.

Bruce Kidd made a strong statement concerning the extent and effects of homophobia in sport in his official endorsement of Gay Games III:

For as long as I can remember, lesbians and gays have counted among the most successful Canadian athletes, and they have contributed in important ways to sport, physical education and recreation. Because of the tremendous homophobia of many in the sports community and the ‘compulsory heterosexuality’, they have had to keep quiet about – often even deny – their sexual orientation.⁴³

Considering the extent of homophobia even in a tolerant city like Vancouver, the gaining of public endorsement from such prominent Canadians was vital in establishing the credibility of this event. It took a concerted effort, involving education and political persuasion over a four- year period, to secure such vital support.⁴⁴

Homophobia

Gay Games III organisers were also affected by this insidious homophobia. In their efforts to secure financial and political support from the various government levels, as well as for the mainstream corporate and sporting communities, they deliberately dropped the use of the word ‘gay’ from the Games. These Games were known officially as Celebration ’90. Shawn Kelly characterised this action as ‘staging the Gay Games by stealth’.⁴⁵ Some board members did not want their names to be publicly associated with the Gay Games – they felt professionally more secure in ‘the

⁴³ MVA&AA, Celebration ’90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival, *Official Press Kit No. 1* (March 1989. Revised: October 1989), p. 17.

⁴⁴ Interview with Shawn Kelly. Implied in various Gay Games III documentation including Barry McDell, Director of MVA&AA and media liaison for Celebration ’90, Official Press Release of Gay Games III, dated (October 15, 1988), pp. 1-2. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, GGIII folder 19, 1988.

⁴⁵ Shawn Kelly was Executive Director of Gay Games II and Consulting Executive Director of Gay Games III over a six-month period between September 1989- March 1990.

closet'.⁴⁶ During his time as Consulting Executive Director of Gay Games III, Kelly emphasised the need to be outwardly proud and affirming of the gayness of the Gay Games and the international gay and lesbian communities it primarily served. This was the spirit that shaped the successful campaign countering the fundamentalists fear mongering.

The process of securing sports facility and accommodation bookings for the Gay Games also exposed homophobic prejudice. The President of the University of British Columbia (UBC), David Strangeway, had denied the regular booking requests for residential rooms and gymnasias made by Celebration '90 Directors Mark Mees and Richard Dopson in October of 1986.⁴⁷ Organisers knew that these facilities had not been booked by other users, and over the next 18 months tried to meet with Strangeway to gain at least some concrete reasons for this refusal. After a number of last minute cancellations of meetings arranged between the University's Board of Governors and Gay Games III Directors, the University students' body obtained a memo in which Strangeway explained his reasons for the ban. He believed the Games was "more political than athletic or cultural and he did not want to involve the University in such a social issue".⁴⁸

This memorandum leak caused a media frenzy, and even Vancouver's daily tabloid, *The Province*, which did not usually report favourably on gay issues, picked up this

⁴⁶ MVA&AA, *Celebration '90: Gay Games III & Cultural Festival Information sheet*, dated (September 15, 1988). There are clear instructions on this document that "for professional reasons, a few of those listed (as Directors on the MVA&AA Board) do not want their association with the Gay Games made public at this time". I have not published any Board of Management names in this thesis that have not been very public in other documentation.

⁴⁷ McDell, *Official Press Release of Gay Games III* (October 15, 1988), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁸ McDell, *Official Press Release of Gay Games III* (October 15, 1988), p. 1.

story and ran an editorial condemning the university for “its failure to give community leadership”.⁴⁹ Games Director and media liaison for the Games, Barry McDell, reported that every significant media outlet had been sympathetic to MVA&AA. In a MVA&AA press release, McDell spelt out the impact of this incident on many of the organisers:

For MVA&AA Board members the struggle has been personal and hurtful. Nine of the twelve members are UBC graduates; several have two degrees from the institution. We have all become conditioned to homophobia, but we don't expect it from our universities. I always believed supporting higher education was an effective way to reduce community prejudice.⁵⁰

Many of the organisers had graduated from UBC and expected more from their alma mater.

Whilst it is not unusual for multi-sports events of similar magnitude and complexity to face challenges in fund raising and logistics, they would not face the difficulties that result from this kind of prejudice. Directors, like Betty Baxter – who had been fired as the coach of the Canadian Women's Volleyball team in 1978 because of her sexuality - had already overcome significant prejudice in their personal and professional lives.⁵¹ They were motivated to stage the Gay Games and be leaders for gay and lesbian people because they believed in the value of self and community affirmation that could be achieved through the Games. Baxter was the Executive Director of Celebration '90 up until 1989 when she left the organisation to accept the

⁴⁹ McDell, *Official Press Release of Gay Games III* (October 15, 1988), p. 1.

⁵⁰ McDell, *Official Press Release of Gay Games III* (October 15, 1988), p. 2.

⁵¹ MVA&AA, *Celebration '90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival. Official Press Kit No. 1*, March, 1989, Revised (October 31, 1989), p. 8.

position of national volleyball coach in Norway.⁵² She was a spectator at the first Gay Games in 1982 and had this to say about her experience:

For me to come out of the straight world, which had just walked all over me, and then to see the Games was exhilarating. It was therapeutic. First, I was shafted for my sexuality, and then I found a whole city celebrating it.⁵³

Organisation

To successfully organise an event of the magnitude and complexity of Gay Games III is difficult enough, made even more so by these added social and financial obstacles. Organisational efforts certainly did not run smoothly in the four year lead up to the Games. MVA&AA struggled to get the local gay and lesbian community behind the event.⁵⁴ The majority had no experience of the Gay Games, and local gay sports infrastructure was in its infancy. Paid staff were not utilised until 1989, and the organisation of the event was the responsibility of each (volunteer) Director of MVA&AA, with their assigned portfolio and fund raising areas.⁵⁵ Some of these volunteer Games officials worked well, others did little.⁵⁶ All Directors were university educated and worked in professional and/or managerial occupations.

After Baxter's departure and the failed appointment of another paid Executive Director, former Gay Games II Executive Director (ED), Shawn Kelly, was persuaded

⁵² Steve Tracey, Interview with Mark Mees in 'Gay Games 1990 Vancouver. For Gay and Lesbian Athletes, It's a New Way to Play the Games, *The Advocate* (August 14, 1990), p. 39.

⁵³ MVA&AA, Celebration '90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival. *Official Press Kit No. 1*, March, 1989, Revised (October 31, 1989), p. 8.

⁵⁴ Steve Tracey, Interview with Mary Brookes, in 'Gay Games 1990 Vancouver. For Gay and Lesbian Athletes, It's a New Way to Play the Games, *The Advocate* (August 14, 1990), p. 40.

⁵⁵ Interview with Kelly.

⁵⁶ Steve Tracey, Interview with Mark Mees, 'Gay Games 1990 Vancouver. For Gay and Lesbian Athletes. Shawn Kelly also confirmed this.

to move cities for a six month period to fulfil the role of Consulting ED.⁵⁷ The hard working and very well networked office manager Mary Brookes ensured that Gay Games were kept on track during these upheavals. Mark Mees, who had been an effective Sports Director for the Games since 1986, took over the ED position on Kelly's departure.⁵⁸ The office grew from two employees to nine over this year period and along with work of hundreds of volunteers Gay Games III and Cultural Festival was successfully staged.

Positive Effects

Kelly described the favourable impact Gay Games III made upon the medium sized city of Vancouver.⁵⁹ The event took over the city centre; its transport system, parks, sports facilities, cultural spaces, entertainment and hospitality precincts. A number of Gay Games III participants that were interviewed fondly reminisced on the way that Vancouver was "taken over"- transformed into a gay city – throughout this event.⁶⁰ Such visibility was possible in a medium sized city. The Gay Games featured in the local media, and many within the larger heterosexual community of the city couldn't help but take some notice of gay and lesbian people.⁶¹ Kelly remembers the positive local press reportage of the Games. The polite, friendly and considerate behaviour of Gay Games participants and spectators was contrasted with the heavy drinking and

⁵⁷ Steve Tracey, Interview with Mark Mees, 'Gay Games 1990 Vancouver. For Gay and Lesbian Athletes, p. 40.

⁵⁸ The Board of Management of Gay Games III were keen to appoint a Canadian to the more permanent position of Executive Director.

⁵⁹ Steve Tracey, Interview with Mark Mees, 'Gay Games 1990 Vancouver. For Gay and Lesbian Athletes, p. 40.

⁶⁰ Interview and conversations with Roz Quarto, Susan Kennedy, Jeffery Pike, Larry Sheahan and "participant" Martine. All interviewed in November and December of 1996.

⁶¹ Interview with Kelly.

loutish behaviour of participants at the Big Summer Festival held prior to the Gay Games.⁶²

Kelly was also impressed by the way that the event mobilised local gay people, bringing the many disparate sections of the community together through a common purpose, and assisted in the forging of local community identity.⁶³ A telling example of the impact this common focus had was Kelly's description of the Games office – where one of the originators of the Gay Games III bid, millionaire businessman Bill Ambudsman, worked alongside the high profile drag queen – Miss Vancouver, and the Gay Games office manager and 'leather dyke' Mary Brookes.⁶⁴

Participation and Inclusion

This newly found community may have strengthened the organisers commitment to inclusion as a guiding principle of the Gay Games. A number of other organisers and participants of previous Gay Games commented on the friendly and inclusive atmosphere of Gay Games III.⁶⁵ Larry Sheehan reflected more deeply on this inclusiveness:

I think Vancouver was very good in moving forward the concept of inclusion and participation...there was just a general emphasis in speeches that were made, in awarding medals, in the opening ceremonies and the closing ceremonies of really underlying those principles as being the sort of moving or generating concepts behind the Games. There was significant participation on the Board by women, there was a sort of local cultural approach to the concept of sport which I think maybe in Vancouver ah, has not been quite so distorted as it's become in parts of the US, so that there wasn't the need so much to go

⁶² This positive newspaper coverage of Gay Games III needs to be verified with archival research. However, Kelly was adamant that it occurred and was vivid in his recall of it.

⁶³ Kelly mentioned that the lesbian and gay men's communities within Vancouver had very little to do with each other up until Gay Games III.

⁶⁴ Interview with Kelly.

⁶⁵ Interview and conversations with Quarto, Kennedy, Pike, Sheehan and (participant) Martine.

back to the principles of the Games because those were more natural for them to begin with and I was impressed with that.⁶⁶

Evidence of the strength of inclusion and participation also occurred within the sports program. For instance new sports such as darts and croquet were added to the program to enable the participation of PWA.⁶⁷ Two of the most popular sports at these Games – Bowling and Volleyball – were open to all participant levels including beginners, intermediate and advanced levels.⁶⁸

However, this inclusive and participatory atmosphere does not appear to have been extended to the more gender non-conforming segments of the gay and lesbian community. The organisers of Gay Game III were conservative in the public image they wished to present to the world concerning gender and sexuality. In addition to the “Gay Games by stealth” accusations, there is strong evidence to suggest that Games organisers marginalised the drag community because they were seen as potentially too transgressive. Mary Brookes wrote a strongly worded letter to the Board of Directors of MVA&AA raising these concerns:

The prospect of excluding members of the ‘drag’ community from an official presence in Celebration ’90 raises a number of issues of deep concern for me. First, as a group, which has been among the most visible segments of our community for decades, drag artists have done a lot of good P.R. for all of us. They were prominent at Stonewall, initiating the Gay Rights movement, as we know it in North America today. They have given existence (in the form of visibility) to a minority group whose existence much of the straight world would like to deny. And they have made major contributions to Celebration ’90....⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Interview with Sheehan.

⁶⁷ MVA&AA, *Celebration ’90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival Official Program* (Vancouver, 1990), pp. 22-23.

⁶⁸ MVA&AA, *Celebration ’90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival Official Program*, pp. 21-32.

⁶⁹ Letter addressed to the Board of Directors of MVA&AAA from Mary Brookes, Office Manager Gay Games III. Archived in SFPL: FGGAS, Box 1, Series III, GGIII folder 8 (undated).

In this letter Brookes also reminded the Board that the Gay Games are about inclusion and they have been staged principally as an event “by, for and about us”. For her, the fear that underlies this exclusionary policy - that of reinforcing transgressive stereotypes in the eyes of the straight community – could not be justified.

In response to these and other protests, it appears that the MVA&AA formally invited drag queens and leather men and women to actively participate in aspects of the Games.⁷⁰ The main donor of the Tom Waddell Cup, given in recognition of outstanding work and leadership within the Gay Games movement, was the leather community of Vancouver. Representative of this community, Robert Neyts, presented this cup for the first time at the closing ceremony of Gay Games III – in leather chaps.⁷¹

In the Vancouver gay and lesbian newspaper *Rites* (September 1990) Shawn Syms highlights a number of other significant instances in which the Board of Directors of Gay Games III used its powers to maintain a more conservative Games image.⁷² The first instances involved a group of women who were organising a women’s comedy and entertainment night that they had titled “The Biggest Lesbian Party”. The MVA&AA Board apparently stepped in and ordered a change in this title, as they deemed the word “lesbian” was exclusionary.⁷³ This could be construed a strange state of affairs considering that the Gay Games were principally for lesbian and gay people. The event was changed to “Women All Night Long”.

⁷⁰ Rachel Lurie, ‘Gay Games III. Sweaty is Sexy’, *The Village Voice* (August 2, 1990). At these Games the Swimming Championships held the first Gay Games Pink Flamingo relay.

⁷¹ Rachel Lurie, ‘Gay Games III. Sweaty is Sexy’.

⁷² Shawn Syms, ‘Celebration ’90. Physique and Critique’, *Rites* (September 1990), pp. 10-13.

⁷³ Syms, ‘Celebration ’90’, *Physique and Critique*, p. 11.

A similar instance occurred when the collective organising the artisan's market at Gay Games III wanted this event named the "Queers in Art Market".⁷⁴ Queer was considered a newly fashionable and more radical term. Queer for these people involved a radical celebration of their differentness from 'the heterosexual order' and the possibilities that were opened up by politics and art. A heated debate ensued involving Gay Games Board members, who did not like the term and its historically demeaning connotations, and those working with the Cultural Festival who identified as queer performers and committee members.⁷⁵ Commenting on the conservative position of the Games organisers, one of the leaders of the Queers in Arts committee had this to say:

Mark Mees, Executive Director of the Games, recently stated that someday there would be no need for a Gay Games, that one day we will all be assimilated into one great big family. I think that this is just one more example of the Board's attempts to deny our specialness. As lesbians and gays we say 'no' to the heterosexual order; in saying 'no' we open up a lot of possibilities, possibilities denied by the organisers of the Games.⁷⁶

The debates over the involvement of the 'margins' of the gay and lesbian community in public events which more conventional and mainstream community members wished to project a 'normal' image, were present in Vancouver. This was a reflection of the conservatism of many MVA&AA Board members and their mainstreaming goals, which were reinforced by their deliberations with Government bodies and business corporations in the pursuit of funding, sponsorship and support as well as the discrimination and prejudice actually experienced during Games organisation. The

⁷⁴ Syms, 'Celebration '90', *Physique and Critique*, p. 11.

⁷⁵ See Letter addressed to Gay Games III Board of Directors (same as MVA&AA) written by Karen Tully, member of the Queers in Arts Organising Committee, dated July 11, 1990. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Series III, Gay Games III folder 8, 1990.

⁷⁶ Syms, 'Celebration '90', *Physique and Critique*, p. 11.

more radical, transgressive currents within the community were largely kept out of the limelight in an effort to further mainstreaming.

Difference Politics and the 'Queer' Turn

Larger social and political developments, especially within gay and lesbian communities during the 1980s and early 1990s, underlined these tensions. Vancouver was the first Gay Games in which identity and difference politics becomes noticeable, and by Gay Games IV and V these community politics were most explicit.

Identity and difference politics were influenced by major shifts in thinking from within the intelligentsia and Universities. Feminists who were not white, middle class and Western critiqued 1970s and 1980s Western style feminism, with its insistence on a unified, stable and coherent category 'woman'.⁷⁷ Scholars in post-colonial studies demonstrated the imperialist Western biases and systems of power in understandings of colonised societies and peoples. The great diversity of human cultures and societies was more greatly appreciated. In a similar way lesbian and gay academics and activists, who were influenced by post-structuralism and the politics of neglect that dominated the crisis started questioning the unified and 'naturalised' identity categories of gay and lesbian. The 'queer turn' had arrived.

Ethnic models of gay and lesbian identity promote coming out as the revelation of an authentic, true self, and provide the foundation for a unified, proud and assertive community formation and politics. However, queer sought to interrogate and

⁷⁷ See A. Brah, 'Questions of Difference and International Feminism', in J. Aaron and S. Walby (eds) *Out of the margins* (London: Sage, 1991), pp. 168-176. Also B. Cassidy, R. Lord and N. Mandell, 'Silenced and Forgotten Women: Race, Poverty, and Disability', in N. Mandell (ed.), *Feminist Issues* (Ontario: Prentice Hall, 1995), pp. 32-66.

denaturalise lesbian and gay especially for their ‘disciplinary regimes, techniques of normalisation’ and exclusion. David Halperin sums up this queer discontent with identity politics:

Disenchantment with liberation (does not) proceed merely from a growing awareness that gay life has generated its own disciplinary regimes, its own techniques of normalisation, in the form of obligatory haircuts, T-shirts, dietary practices, body piercing, leather accoutrements, and physical exercise... Ultimately, I think, what the shift away from a liberation model of gay politics reflects is a deepened understanding of the discursive structures and representational systems that determine the production of sexual meanings, and that micromanage individual perceptions, in such a way as to maintain and reproduce the underpinnings of heterosexist privilege.⁷⁸

In other words, the real danger is the reinforcement of heterosexual ‘naturalisation’ and its consequent hegemony.

The coalition politics of AIDS activism especially within the US also involved the rethinking of identity in terms of affinity rather than essence. It brought together gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, intravenous drug users, sex workers, people with AIDS, health workers, family and friends of gays and PWA. Queer came to signify “an identity without an essence” and was taken on as an identification.⁷⁹ By questioning the conventional understandings of sexuality through the deconstruction of the categories and oppositions that underlie them, queer was not only ambiguous and indeterminate, it was auto-descriptive – the postmodern person performing him/herself.

Queer politics appears to have had most impact within Western academic circles and especially amongst the younger generation of radicals within the US and England.

⁷⁸ David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 32. Quoted in Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1996) p. 92.

⁷⁹ Jagose, *Queer Theory*, p. 62.

Queer radicals took on a militant, defiant, 'in your face', political activism in these countries, especially in response to Government inaction and apparent indifference to the crisis and anti-homosexual legislation such as Clause 28 in England.⁸⁰ Queer radicalism was in its infancy during the immediate lead up to and the staging of Gay Games III. It was a more obvious force during Gay Games IV for historical and geographical reasons. In countries such as the Netherlands, where gay and lesbian communities have enjoyed government support and mainstream social tolerance, the radicalism of queer has not had the same resonance.⁸¹

However, the 'queer turn' coincided with, and probably contributed to some gay and lesbian fashion and lifestyle trends in the main cosmopolitan Western cities during the 1990s. For instance, lesbians could be "butch, butch-femme, dyke, designer dyke, lipstick lesbian, lesbian chic, androgynous style, 'camp' lesbian" as well as leather dykes, drag kings and queers.⁸² There were just as many sexual preferences and lifestyles for gay men. Other important factors such as the decreased influence of lesbian separatist feminism during the 1990s and the power of consumer capitalism were also at play here.

⁸⁰ See Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 299-302 and C. Smyth, *Lesbians Talk Queer Notions* (London: Scarlet Press, 1992), pp. 11-16. Clause 28 was enacted by the Thatcher Conservative British government in 1988. This law disallowed government funds from being directed towards gay and lesbian organisations, associated events and support services or educational programs within Schools or Councils that concerned gay and lesbian issues, the addressing of homophobia, etc..

⁸¹ See Judith Schuyf and Andre Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement. The Politics of Accommodation' in B. Adam, J. Duyvendak and A. Krouwel (eds) *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics. National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 170-171.

⁸² Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 159.

Queer was also used as convenient shorthand for the many in the 1990s coalition of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer communities.⁸³ Difference politics based on the coalition of these dissimilar peoples became a common theme of many Western gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer communities from the mid 1990s. This is what constituted inclusivity and diversity sensitivity within these communities – along with concerns for the dynamics of power, privilege and representation that were constituted by race, class, gender and ability/disability. Tensions inevitably occurred due to the simplification and denial of these power differentials as well as the overriding strength of gay and lesbian identity politics itself. Those identifying as gay men and lesbians appear to have the benefits of majority status, visibility, longevity in political organisation and power within the broader community coalition. Gay men were the strongest force within this coalition and gender politics still has a continuing impact.

In fact, lesbians and/or feminists have critiqued the politics of queer because its very ambiguity and fluidity can result in the valorisation of white gay men.⁸⁴ After working as an academic and activist under ‘queer’, Maria Maggenti reflects on its masculinist bias:

The map of the new queer nation would have a male face and ...mine and those of my many colored sisters would simply be background material. We would be the demographic cosmetics, as it were, to assuage and complement the deeply imbedded prejudices and unselfconscious omissions of so many urgent and angry young men.⁸⁵

⁸³ Jagose, *Queer Theory*, pp. 78-79.

⁸⁴ Jagose, *Queer Theory*, p. 119.

⁸⁵ M. Maggenti, ‘Women as Queer Nationals’, *Out/Look: National Lesbian and Gay Quarterly* no. 11 (1991), pp. 20-23, quoted in Jagose, *Queer Theory*, p. 119.

On the other hand there are a number of more recent prominent 'difference' feminist and queer theorists that are comfortable with queer, such as Judith Butler, Diana Fuss, Teresa de Laurentis and Eve Sedgwick. Difference politics is at play here as well.

Most importantly, many of these developments and tensions of difference and identity politics were played out within the Gay Games of the 1990s. They were certainly present during Gay Games III. However, the communities officially and explicitly recognised within the marketing and inclusive policies of these Games did not extend to bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people. Gay and lesbian identity politics was still the main perspective in 1990, and coalitions engaging these communities had not formed within the general gay and lesbian movement or within the Gay Games. This was to occur during Gay Games IV and V.

International Politics and the Gay Games: The South Africa Issue.

The issue of inclusion was most publicly and politically tested by the debate between SFAA and MVA&AA over the involvement of South Africa in the Gay Games. This issue also provided one of the main catalysts for the foundation of the international overseeing body of the Gay Games movement – the Federation of Gay Games, in 1989. The political context of this issue, including the internationalisation of the Gay Games movement and the significant increase in overseas involvement with Gay Games III participants, all marked a more global Gay Games. In September of 1985, the International Gay and Lesbian Association (ILGA) wrote to SFAA urging them to

exclude South African participation in the Gay Games because of apartheid.⁸⁶ The Scottish Homosexual Rights Group also wrote to them urging a boycott.

SFAA Directors met in December of 1985 to reaffirm their stance that all athletes, regardless of country, were welcome. They wrote a position paper that included this key statement:

SFAA addresses the problem of apartheid in South Africa in the same way it addresses prejudice against any other group in the world, by inviting individuals to participate in activities which promote a climate of cooperation, friendship and understanding. Our major projects, Gay Games II and Cultural Week are designed to be inclusive of all individuals regardless of age, race, religion or geopolitical origin.⁸⁷

While SFAA stated that “apartheid was detestable and that the Government of South Africa was culpable”, they also argued that the Gay Games was not based on representation by country and that to exclude on the basis of geopolitical origin individuals who were already outlawed and oppressed would create “a double jeopardy for that individual”.⁸⁸

SFAA was adamant that no one would be excluded from the Gay Games, and they stuck firm to this policy under considerable criticism.⁸⁹ This stance is similar to that taken by the Olympic Movement, where it is claimed that ‘sport and politics don’t mix’. The policy was not tested as the few South Africans keen to attend Gay Games

⁸⁶ Roy Coe, *A Sense of Pride: The Story of Gay Games II* (San Francisco: Pride Publications 1986), p. 16.

⁸⁷ SFAA, *Position Paper on the Involvement of South Africa in the Gay Games* (1985) Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series II, GGII folder 1, 1985.

⁸⁸ SFAA, *Position Paper on the Involvement of South Africa in the Gay Games* (1985).

⁸⁹ Criticism escalated after the SFAA’s position paper was made public. It came from ILGA, the Scottish group, gay rights groups from Toronto, New Zealand and Australia. Coe, *A Sense of Pride. The Story of Gay Games II*, p. 16.

II decided to respect the position of their black countrymen and women – and respect the sports boycott.⁹⁰

The first sports boycott on the grounds of apartheid was used against the IOC in their acceptance of South Africa in the Mexico Olympics. In 1977 the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) adopted the Gleneagles Agreement, with the active support of the Canadian government.⁹¹ This agreement engaged signatory nations in ‘combating the evil of apartheid by withholding any form of support for, and by taking every practical step to discourage contact or competition by their nationals with sports organisations, teams or sportsmen from South Africa...’⁹² MVA&AA put together a position paper on this issue in November of 1987. In this paper they agreed with the Gleneagles agreement, seeing it as one of the most powerful means of international opposition against apartheid and racism in society and sport. Hence, South African participants were to be excluded from Gay Games III.

The dilemma of this exclusion in the face of the overriding inclusive philosophy of the Gay Games was resolved through the recognition of the real power and politics behind racism and apartheid:

If we reject the boycott in the name of open participation we would not be encouraging ‘inclusivity’ by taking such a stand. Who would come? Only the white gays and lesbians who reject the sports boycott. Our stance would in no way challenge racism in South African sport.⁹³

⁹⁰ Interview with Tony D’Amelda, the delegate from South African gay sport organisation that attended the annual FGG meeting, held in Sydney Australia in September 1996.

⁹¹ MVA&AA, *Position Paper: The Gay Games and the South African Sports Boycott* (1988), p.

2. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, GGIII folder 1, 1988.

⁹² MVA&AA *Position Paper: The Gay Games and the South African Sports Boycott* (1988), p.

3.

⁹³ MVA&AA, *The Gay Games and the South African Sports Boycott*, p. 7.

MVA&AA stated further that they must maintain solidarity with black gays and lesbians in South Africa and their white supporters who want this boycott to take effect, and that they wished for the Gay Games to strengthen the stance of the Canadian government on racism and apartheid. In reality MVA&AA had to adhere to the Canadian sports boycott of South Africa – this was the law of their land.

MVA&AA's position paper recognised the broader context of power and politics that underlined the depth and extent of racial oppression in South Africa and most importantly, the position of the oppressed themselves.

SFAA were provided with a copy of the MVA&AA position paper in December of 1987. They expressed their disappointment that this 'fundamental' of Gay Games philosophy, that is, inclusivity had not been adhered to and that there was no consultation by MVA&AA. Here were the first signs of tension between the organisation that first staged, nurtured and developed the Gay Games and the new host organisation. In the hand-over process of the Games verbal agreement had been reached concerning broad issues of principle and protocol. However, specific policy had not been spelt out and there was no contractually binding arrangements made between SFAA and the new Gay Games hosts.⁹⁴ In a carefully crafted letter of response written by SFAA's secretary Larry Sheehan, the first official articulation of the development of the FGG was apparent: "We believe the situation underlines the need for the creation of an international Board of Directors for future Gay Games beyond 1990 whose membership would consist of individuals from both of our Boards..."⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Interview with Kelly.

⁹⁵ Letter from Larry Sheehan, Secretary of SFAA, to the Board Members of MVA&AA, dated, April 6, 1988. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, GGIII folder 1, 1988.

Before his death, Waddell had met with key people from SFAA and discussed his wishes for an international overseeing body for the Gay Games.⁹⁶ SFAA agreed that such a body would be essential if the Gay Games shaped by their philosophy of inclusion, participation and personal best, were to continue beyond 1990. Rikki Streicher and Larry Sheehan were the key movers of this development.⁹⁷ As acting co-Presidents of this Federation of Gay Games in formation, they put together contact lists of gay and lesbian sport organisers who had attended Gay Games I and II, considered the purpose and organisational structure of the new federation and made arrangements for the first FGG meeting to be held in Seattle in July of 1989.⁹⁸

The internationalisation of the Gay Games movement had begun. Political and philosophical differences, which stemmed at least in part from different national and cultural world outlooks, provided the catalyst for this internationalisation. The first Gay Games to be held outside of the US, Gay Games III, was also more global in participant involvement and attracted people from 30 countries. This global Games participation and reach of the Gay Games movement increased significantly during the 1990s and taken together these probably constitute the largest international gay and lesbian institution along with the Metropolitan Community Church.⁹⁹ These developments can be viewed in the context of wider global developments bringing the

⁹⁶ The interview material concerning the ideas Waddell had for this international body were conflicting and vague so I have not discussed them further in this dissertation. In their interviews Rosemary Mitchell, Sara Lewinstein, Paul Mart and Shawn Kelly discussed Waddell's desire for this internationalisation of the Gay Games.

⁹⁷ Interviews with Mitchell, Kelly and Lewinstein.

⁹⁸ Interviews with Mitchell, Kelly and Lewinstein.

⁹⁹ Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 100.

world closer together within circulating networks of the world capitalist economy, media and communication, and international travel and migration.

Globalisation and Gay and Lesbian Identity

Globalisation

According to a number of academics and world commentators, the world has entered a new phase of global interdependence caused by the growth in new information and communication technologies and a transformation in the world economic system over the past 30 years.¹⁰⁰ David Held encompasses the key features of what has been popularly termed globalisation:

What is new about the modern global system is the chronic intensification of patterns of interconnectedness mediated by such phenomena as the modern communications industry and new information technology and the spread of globalisation in and through new dimensions of interconnectedness: technological, organisational, administrative and legal, among others, each with their own logic and dynamic of change.¹⁰¹

In his influential book on globalisation Anthony Giddens maps out the effects of this global interconnectedness of industrial capitalism in transforming national and international economic structures, societal traditions, family structures, forms of

¹⁰⁰ For instance eminent sociologist Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping Our Lives* (London: Profile Books, 1999), David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblat and Jonathan Perraton. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999); Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society (The Information Age, vol. 1)* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996); Martin Albrow. *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996). Some academics argue that we are not essentially in a new globalisation period, but rather a sped up continuation of global capitalism that has been occurring for the past few centuries. For an example of this position see Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson. *Globalisation in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996). This section of the thesis is not principally concerned with the major intellectual debates concerning whether the world has entered a new phase of global interdependence. However, the existence of the debate is acknowledged.

¹⁰¹ D. Held, 'Democracy, the Nation-State, and the Global System', *Economy and Society*, vol 20, no.2 (1991), p. 145.

government and cultural systems.¹⁰² A brief discussion of these developments and their implications for gay and lesbian identity and existence within the contemporary world follows.

Different forms of globalisation have occurred in the past – for instance the rapid expansion in world trade during the Renaissance, European and English imperialism of Africa, Asia, India and the Middle East during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, the major migrations from the ‘Old World’ to the ‘New’, and the impact of technology like the railway and telegraph. In addition, for the past three millennia there has been a mixing and dispersion of cultures through trade, religion, war and conquest.

This new phase of globalisation is marked by its comprehensiveness, the dramatic compression of time and space, and the sheer rapidity of change. National boundaries struggle to maintain their borders to the flow of ideas, products, money and people. Multinational firms move factories and money across the globe in search of new markets, cheap labour and tax breaks. The global and rapid transmission of the mass media and internet, and the vast reach of consumerism, all make these boundaries pervious.¹⁰³ Postcolonial migration has brought huge numbers of people from developing nations to the industrially developed world.

Postcolonial immigration continues to transform cities and countries with an estimated 100 million migrants and 20 million refugees changing countries each

¹⁰² Each of these areas of social and economic change brought about by globalisation are documented in specific chapters in Anthony Giddens book *Runaway World*.

¹⁰³ Giddens, *Runaway World*, pp. 9-12.

year.¹⁰⁴ Altman observes that “fewer and fewer parts of the world can cling to any sense of racial or ethnic homogeneity, as large scale migration has remade cities of the rich world in the past thirty years”.¹⁰⁵ International travel has also become readily affordable and accessible, especially to people from developed nations, and the development of niche tourist markets, holiday packaging and event tourism is now big business.

Commentators on globalisation generally agree that globalisation simultaneously strengthens and weakens national and local boundaries. Economic institutions and forces have largely eroded these boundaries, creating trade blocks and international financial and trade flows. Supranational institutions such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation also contribute to this erosion. Globalisation of mass cultural forms such as popular music, Hollywood movies, World Cup soccer, the Olympic Games, as well as consumer products like McDonalds, Coca Cola, Levi Jeans and other big brand fashionable footwear and clothing are often used as evidence of a certain homogenisation of cultures.¹⁰⁶

There is certainly strong evidence to indicate that American cultural industries and the ‘American imaginary’ with their promise of affluence, freedom and opportunity, has proliferated across the world. The majority of the largest multinational corporations that dominate global markets for entertainment, news, television, music etc have their

¹⁰⁴ Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ MacDonaldis has been seen by some commentators as an index of globalisation. See George Ritzer, *The Mc Donaldization of Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1993).

home base in the US.¹⁰⁷ Altman documents some specific examples of this American cultural influence – a listing in the current gay international gay guide of Disco Hollywood on Genghis Khan Avenue Ulan Bator; the Swahili masohogan (or passive homosexual) saying that if s/he could be any person s/he wanted to be s/he would choose Madonna; a guide in Casablanca being excited that a McDonalds has just opened close to the city's most famous mosque; the most popular Chinese television series of the 1990s being *Bejingers in New York* (filmed in New York City).¹⁰⁸

American cultural influences resonate strongly within many gay and lesbian cultures around the world. For instance, gay and lesbian communities and organisations within the West mark and celebrate gay liberation and the origins of gay political activism on the anniversary of the Stonewall riots – a conflict between New York City police and drag queens, gay men, lesbians and transgender patrons of New York's Stonewall Inn.¹⁰⁹ Even gay and lesbian communities within cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris, who have histories of gay political activism different to and earlier than Stonewall, observe this.¹¹⁰

Opposition to this cultural, political, economic and military dominance of the US has also grown significantly over the last decade. This has been expressed most dramatically with terrorist attacks, a growing antipathy towards the US amongst many

¹⁰⁷ David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblat and John Perraton, *Global Transformations. Politics, Economics and Culture*, p. 348.

¹⁰⁸ Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 87.

¹¹⁰ The worker and student revolutionary protests within Paris during 1968 were concerned with sexual and gay liberation. Gay rights had been successfully pursued within the Netherlands since the 1950s. See Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement. The Politics of Accommodation'.

Middle Eastern and Muslim peoples, as well as Western anti-global and gulf war protesters and popular movements.

At the same time local popular culture has also flourished within this global context, as evidenced by nationally specific television soaps, film industries and music traditions. Migrants shifting to richer countries still take many of their deeply held customs and traditions with them. There has also been a reassertion of nationalist, ethnic and religious fundamentalism around the world. Parochial forces have also been at play strengthening local boundaries, as evidenced by war and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and the Caucasus.

One of the main factors driving this reaction has been the effects of capitalism, modernity and late modernity upon more traditional patriarchal family structures and ways of life. Historian John D'Emilio has traced this development principally within the US over the last 150 years in relation to the position of gays and lesbians and the reassertion of traditional family values there. He argues that "materially capitalism weakens the bonds that once kept families together so that their members experience a growing instability in the place they have come to expect happiness and emotional security".¹¹¹ A number of conditions were created which allowed some men and women to "organise a personal life around their erotic and emotional attraction to their own sex".¹¹² These included the spread of wage labour, urbanisation, a clear demarcation for most between the public and capitalist world of production and the private world of family, a significant reduction in family and kinship ties of economic

¹¹¹ D'Emilio, 'Capitalism and Gay Identity', pp. 100-117.

¹¹² D'Emilio, 'Capitalism and Gay Identity', p. 104.

interdependency and the resultant 'release of sexuality from the "imperative" to procreate.

The formation of urban communities of gay and lesbian peoples, and more recently, political movements based on gay and lesbian identity were also set in train by these developments in capitalism. Whilst economic individuation has enabled gay men and lesbians to build same-sex households in capitalist societies, the anxiety created by the instability of mainstream family and emotional life has been projected on lesbians, gay men and heterosexual feminists. Neo-liberal economic policy first championed during the 1980s by leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan and taken up within most Western nations have been thought to accelerate this instability.

The growth in new right and Christian fundamentalist reassertion of 'traditional' family life and opposition to gay and women's rights has been a direct result of such instability. This has occurred in many Western countries and has been especially pronounced in the US where three of the Gay Games have been staged. The crisis has also created homophobic backlash. The Christian Fundamentalist campaign to stop the Gay Games from taking place in Vancouver can be viewed within this overall context. Through modernisation, urbanisation, foreign cultural influences and capitalist development, developing nations have more recently experienced similar transformations. Marriage is no longer an essential social and economic arrangement between families, and taken together with individualist assumptions about marriage

being based on romantic love and personal fulfilment, have acted to weaken the extended family structures and ideologies.¹¹³

A central tenant of fundamentalist movements opposed to modernity and to many postcolonial countries asserting their nationalism has been the adherence to rigid patriarchal attitudes and practices toward women and children and the abhorrence of homosexuality, the latter considered an imported Western perversion.¹¹⁴ In Asia, a number of past and present presidents of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia have characterised their countries difference and purity in “Asian values”, which encapsulates the power of the heterosexual patriarchal family and state over “the individuals rights as a human being”.¹¹⁵ In China, homosexuality is criminalized as morally corrupt and anti-socialist. Numerous presidents of African nations have recently denounced homosexuality as “immoral” and “un-African”.¹¹⁶ Ironically, there are rich historical and cultural records of a variety of same-sex relations, erotic bonding and multiple gendering in many parts of Asia and Africa that are denied, made invisible and obliterated by these contemporary perspectives.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Giddens, *Runaway World*, pp. 51-60.

¹¹⁴ Fundamental Islamic countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Taliban governed Afghanistan have executed people found ‘to be homosexual’

¹¹⁵ See E. Blackwood and S. Wieringa (eds) *Same-sex Relations and Female Desires. Transgender Practices Across Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 27, for a discussion of this.

¹¹⁶ President Mugabe of Zimbabwe was the first to declare homosexuality as “un-African”. He was supported in his comments by President Moi in Kenya and Nujoma in Namibia. Homosexual men and women are outlawed, discriminated against and harassed in these countries. See Blackwood and Wieringa (eds), *Same-sex Relations and Female Desires*, p. 27.

¹¹⁷ For instance Chinese women have formed relationships with each other in the Chinese anti-marriage sisterhoods. Kendall presents a rich culture and history of love and sexual relations amongst women in African Lesotho – see Kendall ‘Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia’ in E. Blackwood and S. Wieringa (eds), *Same-sex Relations and Female Desire*, pp. 157-177.

According to Altman, the use of sexuality as a central basis of identity has been promoted in developing countries through surveillance and prevention strategies used to combat HIV/AIDS.¹¹⁸ Western classifications of sexuality have been exported through such health programs, and there has also been a rapid growth in identity politics based on sexuality in many countries.¹¹⁹ Sexual identity and behaviour have become new and sometimes prominent subjects of public discourse in countries, that have had a tradition of treating such issues publicly as taboo.¹²⁰ We will turn briefly to the varieties of gender and sexuality throughout the world. An appreciation of this diversity and an understanding of the nature and influence of modern Western forms of sexual identity are central in the story of the Gay Games increasing global reach.

Global LGBT Identity and Varieties of Gender and Sexuality Across the World.

Homosexual behaviour and transgender peoples have existed in most societies, although the ways gender, sexuality and identity have been configured and performed have varied considerably across cultures. Western expressions of homosexuality are strong markers of modernity in developing countries and are characterised by differentiation between sexual and gender transgression; an identification with gayness and lesbianism; an emphasis on the emotional and sexual in same-sex relationships; and membership of a public homosexual world involving leisure activities, fashions, cultural interests, media, community welfare and political organisations.

¹¹⁸ Altman, *Global Sex*, pp. 74-75. See pp. 175-177 of this thesis for more discussion concerning HIV/AIDS and global issues.

¹¹⁹ Altman, *Global Sex*, pp. 74-75.

¹²⁰ Altman, *Global Sex*, pp.75-76, 92.

These gay and lesbian subcultures are often derivative of international gay trends, attributable to a number of globalising influences.¹²¹ These include international travel, the reach of international media, films, literature, popular music, the diffusion of information and creation of virtual communities via computers and the internet, the political activism of international bodies fighting for gay and lesbian rights, and the effects of economic development and modernisation particularly on the middle and upper classes of developing countries. The US has been the dominant cultural model for international gay subcultures.

There are many examples of indigenous relations of same-sex desire and transgenderism. For instance, in Native American tribal societies within the US and Canada, multiple genders were possible. Women-men (males who had partially or completely adopted the social role of women) frequently entered into sexual and even marriage relations with men of the tribe.¹²² There is also evidence of men-women taking on warrior and healing roles and marrying tribal women. Anthropologists have come to see different gender constructions at work here – third and fourth genders “embodied in a native American world view emphasising transformation and change”.¹²³ Such roles continue to exist in ‘two-spirited’ Native Americans who do not feel at ease with categories like gay and lesbian because, as Lang points out, “these categories define in terms of sexual behaviour instead of personhood,

¹²¹ Altman, *Global Sex*, chapter six. This section was also informed by Altman’s earlier and more detailed understandings of global shaping of gay and lesbian identities in his journal article ‘Rupture or Continuity? The Internationalisation of Gay Identities,’ *Social Text*, vol. 14, no. 3 (1996), pp. 77-94.

¹²² Sabine, Lang, ‘Lesbians, Men-women and Two-spirits: Homosexuality and Gender in Native American Cultures’, in Blackwood and Wieringa (eds), *Same-sex Relations and Female Desires*, pp. 91-119.

¹²³ Lang, ‘Lesbians, Men-women and Two-spirits’, p. 93.

spirituality, and specific, complex identities deriving from the experience of being Native American...”.¹²⁴

Colonisation and the influence of white concepts of Christianity over the past 100 years have also had a dramatic impact on these traditions – usually in terms of repression and strong moral disapproval. Contemporary women-men and men-women as well as Native gays and lesbians live on reservations, but do so in a way that they do not set themselves apart from the rest of the community. Through the common experience of homophobic discrimination from their families and communities, numerous lesbian and gay Native Americans leave the reservation for the cities where it is possible to live more openly and freely. In this context incorporations of behaviour from the urban lesbian and gay subculture occurs, but Native American identity is still central to their lives.¹²⁵

“Transgender” people in Indonesia (*waria*), Thailand (*kathoey*), Morocco (*hassas*) and the Philippines (*bayot*) are characterised by transvestite and homosexual behaviour.¹²⁶ Peter Jackson outlines six different sex/gender contemporary ‘male’ identities and three ‘female’ identities that have developed through the combined influence of Western-style gay identities and the “continuing power of indigenous gender-based conceptions of sexuality in Thailand”.¹²⁷ Interestingly, there were only two sex/gender categories for males in Thailand a few decades ago - the gender normative man and the non-normative *kathoey*. All men who did not conform to

¹²⁴ Lang, ‘Lesbians, Men-women and Two-spirits’, p. 93.

¹²⁵ Lang, ‘Lesbians, Men-women and Two-spirits’, pp. 112-113.

¹²⁶ Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 90.

¹²⁷ Peter Jackson, ‘The Persistence of Gender’ in *Australian Queer, Meanjin*, vol. 1 (1996), pp. 115-118.

normative masculine behaviour were seen as *kathoeys*. What was regarded as non-sexual acts such as mutual masturbation, kissing and oral sex between normative males did not effect the participant's normativity. On the other hand, men who played the passive receptive role in anal intercourse were considered *kathoey*.

The dramatic increase in the varieties of sexualities and identities, including heterosexual, bisexual, active homosexual, sexually versatile and homosexual, all corresponding to numerous gender positions are bounded by these two original sex/gender identities. *Kathoey* in contemporary times is defined as effeminate or cross gender and having a passive homosexual orientation. Thai lesbians also have gender-defined sexualities, although there are fewer categories to be identified with/in due to their greater social invisibility.¹²⁸ Jackson concludes that:

The mere existence of the word 'gay' in the contemporary Thai language does not indicate that a global gay identity or a transnational homogenisation of human sexuality is a necessary outcome of the impact of yet again another universalising world culture. Thailand has withstood waves of universalising cultures in the past – notably Indian and Chinese – appropriating and accommodating elements of these foreign influences while retaining a distinctive cultural formation in the domains of sex and gender.¹²⁹

The accommodation of Western notions of gay and homosexual identity within Thai cultural scripts is well documented in this one account of sex/gender/sexuality variability.

Such variability is also illustrated by the 'intermediate' gender categories of peoples indigenous to the Polynesian islands. Besnier uses the term 'gender liminality' to describe the adoption by individuals of attributes normally associated with a gender

¹²⁸ Jackson, 'The Persistence of Gender', p.118.

¹²⁹ Jackson, 'The Persistence of Gender', p. 119.

other than their own.¹³⁰ In Tahiti and Hawaii, men adopting the social affectations, dress and work roles of women are known as *mahu*, whilst in Samoa they are known as *fa'afafine* (literally 'in the fashion of a woman) and in Tonga, *fakafefine*.¹³¹ Polynesian women who take on the social attributes normally enacted by men (Tongan *fakatangata* and Samoan *fa'tama*) also exist, but in considerably fewer numbers.¹³²

Being 'gender liminal' does not automatically mean that one has a preference for homosexual relations. Such relations with men are seen "as an optional consequence of gender liminality, rather than its determiner, prerequisite or primary attribute".¹³³ Hence, it is distinctly different from Western notions of gay and lesbian identity, where sexual orientation is the defining feature. Another important difference is the fact that 'gender liminal' men engaged in same sex-sexual relations do so with non-liminal men and never with "members of their own category".¹³⁴ Non -liminal men engaged in such sexual encounters nearly always take on the active, penetrative role and often regard the encounters as convenient, pleasurable, and easy, that is, of no consequence other than a release of sexual tensions. A gender liminal person may change to being non – liminal, marry, father children and suffer no stigma from his past liminality. However, being gender-liminal does carry a social stigma and lower a person's social rank. This stigma appears to be related to its association with negative/inadequate masculinity and sexual promiscuity.

¹³⁰ Nikko Besnier, 'Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space', in Gilbert Herdt (ed.) *Third Sex, Third Gender. Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, (New York: Zone Books, 1994), pp. 285-328.

¹³¹ Besnier, 'Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space', pp. 286-287.

¹³² Besnier, 'Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space', p. 288.

¹³³ Besnier, 'Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space', p. 300.

¹³⁴ Besnier, 'Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space', p. 300.

The influence of colonial Christianity and, in latter times, modern notions of homosexuality have also had a transforming effect on these traditional sex/gender social relations and categories. The overall picture Besnier depicts of gender liminality in Polynesia is one of complexity, ambiguity and contestation. Strong indigenous traditions of gender and sexuality are at play here which are distinctly different from modern Western notions of homosexuality and transgender.

The *Mati* work of working class Surinamese Creole women illustrates again different configurations of gender and sexuality.¹³⁵ *Mati* are women who have sexual relations with men and women, either simultaneously or consecutively. These relations are viewed by the *Mati* as behaviours rather than fixed identities. Many *Mati* women still have ties with men as husbands, lovers and friends, typically have children, whilst also enjoying sexual and loving relations with women in their working class communities. These same-sex relations are also based on reciprocity – helping with childcare, domestic work, emotional support, earning money, etc. Gloria Wekker, the anthropologist researching *mati* work, found these sexual relations to be widespread, culturally accepted and persistent enough to be noticeable in migrant working class Creole communities such as the Surinamese of Amsterdam.¹³⁶

Wekker's analysis of the historical, cultural and religious configurations of the self, sexuality and gender relations in Surinamese lower class culture reveals quite a different context from that of the west. The subject is not the "unitary, authentic,

¹³⁵ Gloria Wekker, ' "What's Identity Got to Do With It?" Rethinking Identity in Light of the *Mati* Work in Suriname', in E. Blackwood and S. Weringa, *Same-sex Relations and Female Desire*, pp. 119-138.

¹³⁶ Wekker, ' "What's Identity Got to Do With It?"' pp. 121-122.

bounded, static, trans-situational' one of the West.¹³⁷ Rather the self is understood as "multiplicitious, malleable, dynamic, and contextually salient".¹³⁸ Furthermore, gender relations within Surinamese society are relatively egalitarian, and both women and men are seen as "full sexual subjects, with their own desires and own possibilities to act on these desires".¹³⁹ Sexual pleasure and fulfilment is regarded as healthy and vital and the gender of one's object choice is not a major concern. From this research Wekker makes this important conclusion concerning the validity of positing a single, cross-cultural conceptualisation of same-sex sexual behaviour and identity:

The cross-cultural study of same-gender sexual behaviour should proceed from the realisation that "homosexualities" are multiple and manifold, realised in different contexts and charged with different meanings... The use of seemingly innocuous concepts, such as "homosexual identity", contributes to the export of Western categories of thought.¹⁴⁰

Western ways of thinking and living sexuality have been exported and do resonate in many other cultures. Traditionally in Latin America a 'real man' can still have sex with other men and not risk his heterosexual identity – so long as he is the active (penetrative) partner and does not identify as homosexual. Western notions of homosexuality have circulated within public discourse in Latin America over the past 10-20 years with the result, ironically, that the active partner has also become more vulnerable to the stigma of homosexuality. Public discourse concerning homosexuality - created during the nineteenth century as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis - has largely been confined to the West. This has changed with the

¹³⁷ Clifford Geertz, 'From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', In Richard Shweder and Robert. A. LeVine (eds) *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 123-136.

¹³⁸ Wekker, ' "What's Identity Got to Do With It?"', p. 125.

¹³⁹ Wekker, ' "What's Identity Got to Do With It?"', p. 125.

¹⁴⁰ Wekker, ' "What's Identity Got to Do With It?"', p. 134.

impact of globalisation and HIV/AIDS, although colonial discourses of bourgeoisie respectability and Victorian morality had some impact on past colonies.

Globalisation has been involved in the creation of an international gay and lesbian identity. “Modern” ways of being homosexual are being expressed and lived in cities as far a field as New Delhi, Lima, Bangkok, Brazil and Poland.¹⁴¹ The gay worlds within these cities and many others especially in the west are key examples of an emerging global subculture where its members have more in common with each other than they do with the rest of the society in which they live.¹⁴² A global lesbian identity is less obvious due to the significant difference in women’s social and economic position within most societies, when compared with men’s.

Taking on a modern homosexual identity is difficult enough in developed countries that have gay rights protection within the law. It is especially difficult in societies where traditional family structures and religious beliefs predominate, homosexuality is criminalised, and governments deliberately threaten the existence of homosexuality through ideology and policy. For instance, in Malaysia, where homosexuality is punishable with a prison sentence and vilification, deference to family and religion (Islam for many) is strong, and there is no public gay and lesbian sub-culture.

According to Altman, strong gay and lesbian networks exist in Kuala Lumpur – accessible by phone, fax, email and private parties. Postmodern hybridity is played out when a dutiful son or daughter goes to a family celebration one night, and on the next goes to one of these parties or dresses in drag at Kuala Lumpur’s gay bar.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Altman, *Global Sex*, pp. 86-88.

¹⁴² Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 86.

¹⁴³ Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 92.

Whilst working in Saudi Arabia during the early 1980s, Tom Waddell chose to remain celibate, for even though homosexual behaviour was quite common between men, the consequences could be tragic (e.g., death penalty) if the authorities caught the participants. There was no gay sub-culture or postmodern performance of identity here.¹⁴⁴

Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is one of the few areas not explicitly prohibited or even mentioned in any international treaty or standard protecting human rights. Human rights abuses against same-sex attracted peoples throughout the world are well documented by Amnesty International.¹⁴⁵ Human rights violations of GLBT people include discrimination, harassment, torture, ill treatment, unjust imprisonment and capital punishment.¹⁴⁶ Rienfield and Rosenbloom have also documented the abuses faced by women in same-sex relations across the globe.¹⁴⁷ Human rights abuses include murder, rape, forced heterosexual marriage, denial of custody rights to their children, employment and financial discrimination, and psychiatric institutionalisation. In Iran, women caught in sexual relations with one another for the fourth time can be executed. Silence, secrecy and seclusion are often the best survival strategies in this hostile and oppressive context.

Considering this bleak picture for many GLBT people in the world the securing of basic human rights is vital. Legal reform, consciousness raising, support for victims of

¹⁴⁴ Waddell and Schaap, *Gay Olympian: The Life and Death of Dr. Tom Waddell* (New York: Knopf, 1996), pp. 136-138.

¹⁴⁵ Amnesty International, *Crimes of Hate, Conspiracy of Silence. Torture and Ill-treatment Based on Sexual Identity* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2001).

¹⁴⁶ Amnesty International, *Crimes of Hate, Conspiracy of Silence*.

¹⁴⁷ Mona Reinfelder (ed.) *Amazon to Zami: Towards a Global Lesbian Feminism* (London: Cassell, 1996), and Rachel Rosenbloom (ed.) *Unspoken Rules: Sexual Orientation and Women's Human Rights* (London: Cassell, 1996).

crime, as well as health and welfare support networks and political organisations and activism are important in securing these rights. It is also important that such initiatives are culturally sensitive and appropriate, and that any 'outside' support should be initiated by the national or regional group requiring assistance. Self-determination, respect for a variety of ways of being same –sex attracted and transgendered and for having a variety of strategies to cope with oppression should be central tenets of any international GLBT human rights efforts.

These complex issues of global GLBT existence, rights and identity are very relevant for the largest international gay and lesbian institution – the Gay Games. These Games purport to be about 'changing the world' through the promotion of self and community respect of GLBT peoples. Sport and culture are thought to be the tools for bringing people together in common enjoyment and discovery. Gender normative out and proud gay and lesbian peoples mainly from the west have been the dominant participant groups in these Games. How the Gay Games include others in global GLBT communities is the aim of the next section.

Global Trends of Gay Games III

Gay Games III placed the Games fully into the international arena. Just under half of its participants came from outside of the US, which stood in contrast to Gay Games II, where over half came from California itself.¹⁴⁸ Participants hailed from 30 countries and five different continents, although the large majority were from Western cosmopolitan cities such as Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, The Hague, Oslo, Sydney,

¹⁴⁸ Jack Murphy, 'Vancouver's Personal Best. Lesbian and Gay Athletes Gear Up for Gay Games III'. *San Francisco Sentinel* vol.16, no. 35 (August 26, 1998), pp. 1-2.

Melbourne, Auckland and most of the main cities within the US and Canada.¹⁴⁹ The main countries of origin represented at the Games were: the US (4,821), Canada (1,334), Federal Republic of Germany (183), Australia (169), New Zealand (92), France (67), the Netherlands (35), Switzerland (30), England (15) and Japan (7).¹⁵⁰ There were also individual participants from Poland, Guam, Israel and Mexico.¹⁵¹ According to the November-December 1988 edition of the official 'Celebration '90 newsletter entitled 'Worldwide outreach making Celebration '90 truly international', a number of MVA&AA Board members visited six of the main target countries to promote the Gay Games. These countries were Holland, France, West Germany, Norway, Australia and New Zealand. Outreach efforts and the final participation figures were reflected in the MVA&AA's business plan written in early 1989 which cites the US, Canada and participants attending the Games in Western Europe as the pa

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Communication and promotional efforts appear to have had three main aims. Firstly they were concerned with ensuring the US and especially Californian basis for the Gay Games was maintained. Secondly, they aimed to generate a strong interest in, support for and attendance at the Games amongst Canadian gay and lesbian communities. Thirdly, these efforts were about nurturing ties and promoting Gay Games III to the newly developing gay and lesbian sports communities and organisations within Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand. One of the only

¹⁴⁹ Steve Tracy, 'Good Sports. Sizing up Gay Games III', *The Advocate* (August 14, 1990), p. 30. (Special edition on Gay Games III of the prime gay and lesbian magazine published within the US)

¹⁵⁰ Tracy, 'Good Sports....', p. 30.

¹⁵¹ According to the Athlete Marshalling information brochure included in every registration pack of athletes participating in Gay Games III. There were no official demographics summarising Gay Games registrations found in the Gay Games archives.

¹⁵² MVA&AA, *Celebration '90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival Business Plan* (dated early 1989 within the document itself) pp. 2-8. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Series III, GGIII folder 1, 1989.

documented non- Western participants who attended these Games – from Poland - told of how the event was brought to his attention through reading a Dutch gay magazine.¹⁵³ He subsequently wrote a letter to MVA&AA requesting more information and eventually received travel and accommodation support from individuals and MVA&AA to attend the Games. Outreach for these Games was principally about establishing communication networks with established Western gay and lesbian sports and community organisations and distributing Gay Games information and promotional materials. It wasn't until Gay Games V that Outreach efforts extended well beyond the West and involved financial and organisational assistance.

The contents of the sports program, cultural festival and events during Gay Games III were aimed at a Western gay and lesbian participant base and spectatorship. The public nature of gay and lesbian identity and community celebration at these Gay Games makes this event a strong expression of modern Western homosexuality. They were certainly the largest international expression of this dominant form of same-sex desire and identity up until Gay Games IV. Other cultural forms of same-sex desire were not considered let alone given a platform at Gay Games III. This can be understood within the overall historical and international context of the Gay Games movement in 1990.

¹⁵³ 'Celebration '90 Snapshots', *Frontiers*, September 14, 1990, p. 26.

Conclusion: Gay Games III – The Transitional Games

Gay Games III marks a turning point in the development of the Games. Many of the organisers were relatively conservative with the normalising image they wished to project for the Games. However, cultural and sport participation nearly tripled in size and there was greater diversity in terms of gender, sporting and cultural talent and interest, involvement of differently abled peoples and from gay and lesbian communities outside of the US.¹⁵⁴ Acknowledgement of the strategic value of the ‘pink dollar’ in selling sponsorship and gaining respectability also started with these Games – a strategy that was pursued most emphatically and successfully four years later with Gay Games IV in New York. These developments marked the beginnings of the commercialisation and internationalisation of the Gay Games.

However, Gay Games III was experienced by many of the interviewed participants and organisers as the last to have a local feel – concentrated as it was in a medium sized city by world standards, receiving little media attention outside of the local press. Larry Sheehan described the Vancouver Games as an interim stage and a hiatus in the Gay Games movement – because of their in-betweenness as well as the fact that their organisers did not take an active involvement in the FGG once ‘Celebration ’90’ was over:

Vancouver is really the link between it becoming an ongoing international phenomenon if you will, and a local, self-generated thing out of the City of San Francisco, and I think of Vancouver as an interim stage between New York which was much more high profile, and between San Francisco which in spirit was clearly still very amateurish in what I would say is the good and bad sense of the word amateurish, so that Vancouver is a hiatus...and as far as analysing, the missing link once the movement continues.¹⁵⁵

The development of the Federation of Gay Games and the subsequent globalisation of the Gay Games movement during the 1990s will now be examined.

Internationalisation of the Gay Games Movement.

The Federation of Gay Games

At the first meeting of the FGG around 40 delegates attended – over three quarters coming from the US. The remaining delegates came from Canada and there were two from Europe.¹⁵⁶ The first elected office bearers of this organisation were: Co-Presidents Richard Peterson (Team Seattle) and Peg Grey (Team Chicago), Vice President Shawn Kelly (SFAA), Recording and Corresponding Secretaries respectively, Rosemary Mitchell (SFAA) and Michael Clarke (SFAA) and Treasurer Margaret Hedgecock (Team Seattle). By June 1990 the membership of the FGG had been established. All office bearers and co-Chairs of the six committees that were active within FGG were also from North America.¹⁵⁷

As far as the representation of FGG, women made up 17 of the 48 Directors, probably one of the more balanced gender ratios the FGG has known. Currently there are 48

¹⁵⁶ Europe was represented by Rob Blokpoel from the Netherlands and Pascal Rossignol from the Culture and Sports Group based in France (CGIF). See the minutes of the first meeting of the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGSLF), held in the Hague and formed a month (9 September 1989) after this meeting. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, Gay Games III folder. A delegate may have attended from Australia as well. As there were no official minutes of this first FGG meeting found in the archives the attendance figure is based on recollections in interviews and the final listing of FGG Directors and organisations accepted as members that was outlined in the following years annual FGG minutes. This document is titled *Federation of Gay Games INC Board of Directors – As of June 3, 1990*. The FGG minutes from this date up until 1996 were copied for the researcher by the corresponding secretary Michael Clarke at the 1996 FGG annual meeting held in Sydney, Australia in September 1996. All of these minutes are archived in CSPGGA, VU.

¹⁵⁷ Committees were Finance, Membership, Publicity, Awards, Archives and Property and Site Selection. See *Federation of Gay Games Inc Board of Directors – As of June 3, 1990* for details.

Directors, but only 11 are women. The international scope of the FGG is more balanced though, with representation outside of North America taking up ten of the Directorships, encompassing Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Britain and South Africa. FGG has been a nearly all white organisation.¹⁵⁸ Membership is also strongly middle class, white, university educated, professional and relatively conservative and mainstream – as gay and lesbian organisations go.¹⁵⁹ A number of the Directors owned or managed private businesses, worked as managers in the public sector or were lawyers.¹⁶⁰ Directors have to be relatively well off as they largely have to fund their own international travel to attend meetings.

The purpose of the FGG that was adopted at this meeting reads thus:

The primary purpose of the Federation of Gay Games shall be to foster and augment the self-respect of gay women and men throughout the world and to engender respect and understanding from the non-gay world through the medium of organised, non-competitive cultural/artistic and athletic activities...it shall be a fundamental principle of this Corporation that all activities conducted under its auspices shall be inclusive in nature and that no individual shall be excluded from participating on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political beliefs, being physically challenged or athletic/artistic ability, or HIV status.¹⁶¹

This purpose was essentially an extension of SFAA's, especially the categories of inclusion. The main functions of the FGG involved maintaining the integrity of the Gay Games, selecting sites for future Games, promoting the Games and their

¹⁵⁸ There appears to have been only one African American Director and one black South African Director since the FGG was founded.

¹⁵⁹ The predominant profile of those interviewed for their organisational involvement in the Gay Games, the FGG, EGSLF and the British Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation – was one of relative conservatism when compared with the more radical activism of gays and lesbians within political organisations such as ILGA, ACTUP, University Queer student bodies and the like.

¹⁶⁰ See Appendix for basic demographic information on Gay Games organisers that were interviewed for this dissertation.

¹⁶¹ FGG, 'Article 1', *Federation of Gay Games, Inc. Bylaws* (adopted July 3, 1989). Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, FGG folder.

philosophy, and supporting the production and funding of the Games.¹⁶² In a letter dated 17 August 1989 co-Presidents Richard and Peg outlined the main objectives of the FGG over its first twelve months to all Federation Board Members. These included determining the criteria for awarding the Game to the next host city in 1994, selecting an actual site from host cities wishing to stage the Games, establishing the 'minimal specifications of what the Games are (what sports to include, opening and closing ceremonies, minimal cultural requirements, etc), establishing membership goals and criteria, exploring ways to improve gender parity and raising funds for the FGG and Gay Games III.¹⁶³

The minutes of the annual FGG Board meeting held in Denver, Colorado on the weekend of June 2 1990 indicates that most of these objectives were achieved and the site for the 1994 Gay Games was chosen – the New York City proposal out voting that of Sydney.¹⁶⁴ The structure of the FGG is clear from these minutes. Eight Directors positions were set aside for SFAA to recognise their key role in establishing the Gay Games and to ensure Games continuity. Four positions were set-aside for MVA&AA Board members to recognise the role and ensure the accountability to the FGG of the main leaders of the next Gay Game. Thirty-two Directors of the FGG held leadership positions within a variety of lesbian and gay sport, and to a far lesser extent, cultural organisations. These were either the leading representatives of city teams, international gay and lesbian sports organisations (most with headquarters in

¹⁶² Interviews with Sheehan, Kelly, and Mitchell. Also outlined in a working document written by FGG dated May 10, 1990, outlining the Purpose, Mission, Bylaws, Goals, Structure and membership of the FGG. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, FGG folder.

¹⁶³ Letter from co-Presidents Richard Peterson and Peg Grey addressed to all Federation Board Members (dated 17 August 1989). Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, FGG folder.

¹⁶⁴ Federation of Gay Games, Inc, Minutes – 2/6/90 – 3/6/90, Denver, Colorado. Received from FGG Correspondence Secretary Michael Clarke at the annual FGG meeting held in Sydney in 1996. Archived in CSPGGA, VU.

the US), US based cultural organisations and representation from European national sport bodies including the newly formed EGSLF. Individual members held the remaining four Directorships from the US who were valued for their professional input to the FGG. During the 1990s the number of individual Directorships expanded to include longer serving members who no longer directly represented their original organisation but were deemed valuable contributors.

Most of these Directors have also been from the US, and there is a sense that members from other nations and regions have felt the ongoing strength of the US, and at times American provincialism of some US Directors, of the FGG. This was commented on by a number of FGG members interviewed for this dissertation as well as witnessed by me first hand during the two annual FGG meetings I attended.¹⁶⁵

Internationalisation was pursued by the FGG in several ways: the creation of an Outreach committee in 1990, the endeavours of well travelled and long serving Directors – Paul Mart and Derek Liekty – and the establishment of a FGG website during the late 1990s.¹⁶⁶ A brief analysis of these initiatives will follow an overview of significant developments in this internationalisation process of gay and lesbian sport and culture within Europe and Australia. International gay and lesbian sports bodies were also being established during the late 1980s – mid 1990s, and a number of them are affiliated with the FGG.

¹⁶⁵ The annual FGG meeting in Sydney in 1996 and in Denver in 1997.

¹⁶⁶ Federation of Gay Games Website: <http://www.gaygames.com/en>

Internationalisation beyond the US

The European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation

During the second week of September 1989, thirty-five delegates from all over Europe including Germany, France, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands met at a “Gay Sport Integration Congress” in The Hague.¹⁶⁷ Organisers of this Congress, Pascal Rossignol from C.G.P.I.F (France) and Rob Blokpoel from The Netherlands had attended the first FGG meeting, and as a result, ‘decided to form a European Master-Organisation’. There appears to have been enough gay and lesbian sports organisations in existence across Europe to provide the critical momentum for this broader development.¹⁶⁸

In a study by the EGLSF, which used surveys and registered membership data bases to chart the growth of these organisations over the period 1982 – 1995, the following patterns were found.¹⁶⁹ The first gay and lesbian sport groups within Europe were founded in the early 1980s and these were male dominated. The number of athletes registered in European gay sports clubs tripled over the 1988 – 1990 period and after 1991, there is even greater growth, with a total of 6,000 members. A similar pattern occurs with lesbian sport involvement in Europe, although their membership numbers are significantly less, and over 50% of all sports groups are still male dominated. The

¹⁶⁷ Minutes of “Gay Sport Integration Congress”, The Hague, September 9, 1989. Archived in SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, FGG folder,

¹⁶⁸ Minutes of “Gay Sport Integration Congress”, p. 2-3 gives a summary of the number of sports organisations within each country represented at the meeting.

¹⁶⁹ Mark Tent, EGLSF, *Development of Organised Sport for Gays and Lesbians in Europe Between 1982 and 1995*, Frankfurt, 1996.

most popular sports overall are volleyball, badminton, swimming, soccer, track and field and running.

According to the Sports Congress minutes, there are noticeable cultural differences within the organisations of different countries. For instance, the integration of gays and lesbians within the mainstream sports world has been one of the primary aims of gay sports organisations within the Netherlands. Due to a history of separatism between gay and lesbian organisations and cultures within Germany, integration in this country is primarily concerned with bringing these communities together.¹⁷⁰

Delegates appear to have formed five discussion groups to workshop the feasibility and purpose of a European Federation of Gay sport, and they concluded that EGLSF should be founded for the following purposes: to coordinate activities and competitions, and to assist in the organisation of gay and lesbian sports clubs as well as “to take care of the emancipation, toleration, acceptance and integration of all homosexual women and men in sport”.¹⁷¹ Lesbian was added to the name of the new Federation to recognise the equal contribution of women in the organisation. A comprehensive list of sport and social activities put on by EGLSF accompanied the minutes.

Throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium, EGLSF has operated as a loose federation of gay and lesbian sports organisations within Europe. It has performed a number of functions, including enabling such organisations to form, providing

¹⁷⁰ Minutes of “Gay Sport Integration Congress”, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ Minutes of “Gay Sport Integration Congress”, p. 4.

information and support to European gay and lesbian sport participants, leading policy initiatives within Europe that address homophobic discrimination in sport, and coordinating gay and lesbian sports events across Europe. It is this body that selects the host for the EuroGames – a multi-sport festival emphasising participation and enjoyment that are held every one to two years within one of the main cities of Europe. The EuroGames have been described as the largest event of the gay community in Europe.¹⁷²

In 2000 these Games were staged in Zurich and, over a two-day period, 2,134 women and 2,099 men participated in a program covering 20 sports and a variety of social and cultural events. Gender parity has been a key goal of the EuroGames. Through affirmative promotion and the reserving of 50% of the registered sport places for women, this goal was definitely achieved at the Zurich Games. Unlike FGG, EGLSF does not specify which sports have to be on the Games program, and there is greater organisational autonomy given to the host city of the EuroGames.

Gay Integration Through Sport and Art Holland

The founding of the umbrella organisation for sport and culture in the Netherlands – Gay Integration Through Sport and Art Holland (GISAH) - also occurred at the Gay Sport Integration Congress of 1989. Because of the more tolerant climate for gays and lesbians in the Netherlands, GISAH not only organises sports events for gays and lesbians in Holland, but also works with the national and regional Dutch governments to establish a more accepting climate within sport for gays, and to assist other

¹⁷² Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 156.

countries in this endeavour. In the 1996 program for the annual Sports Unites Festival, hosted in The Hague, and attracting over 700 Dutch lesbian and gay sport participants, GISAH boasts of its accomplishments. These include: the staging of the first annual Sports Unites Festival in 1989; publishing the “Black book” which reveals incidents of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation within Dutch sport since 1991; the organisation of the first and second EuroGames in the Hague in 1992 and 1993; working on educational projects with the national sport overseeing body during the 1990s to address discrimination in sport; membership of the Steering Committee “European Manifest for Tolerance and Fair Play in Sport”, as well as a variety of other educational and sports event initiatives.

Developments in Gay and Lesbian Sport and Culture in Australia, Great Britain and South Africa

Organisations and events representing and engaging gay and lesbian sport interests at a national level also developed within Australia, Great Britain and South Africa during the late 1980s and 1990s. Whilst there is no co-ordinating national body within Australia, well established city teams such as Team Sydney, Team Melbourne and Team Perth have been hosting an annual, multi-sport “for all” festival named the Australia Gaymes since the late 1980s. Team Sydney has organised an annual sports festival to coincide with the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras throughout the 1990s. The original catalyst and model for these Australian organisations and events was the Gay Games.¹⁷³ The British Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (BGLSF) was founded in

¹⁷³ Gays and lesbians from Australia have attended all of the Gay Games and organisational leaders have been involved in the FG from 1990. Paul Mart recalled his outreach efforts to inform people and promote the Gay Games particularly in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney since 1981. Interview with Paul Mart.

1994 and is currently one of the fastest growing sections of the gay and lesbian community within the UK.¹⁷⁴

According to a long-term leader within gay sport in South Africa, Anthony d'Almeida, gay sports events and organisations have been flourishing since the end of Apartheid.¹⁷⁵ The main body coordinating this development – Afrika Borwa (TOGS) – officially affiliated with the FGG in 1998, and in 2001 the annual meeting of the FGG was held in Johannesburg.¹⁷⁶ D'Almeida also recalled the interest that the fledgling gay and lesbian sports organisations within South Africa had for the Gay Games throughout the 1980s. As an act of political solidarity with black South Africans and the international sports boycott, they chose not to send a team to the Games until 1994 when Apartheid had ended.

International Gay and Lesbian Sports Bodies

The boom in gay and lesbian amateur level sport throughout the West during the 1990s and its globalisation was also evidenced by the foundation and growth of international gay and lesbian sports bodies and championships. This development was a logical follow on to the increase in participation at local, regional and national levels. Swimmers who had met at the first two Gay Games, and were keen to establish regular gay swimming championships within the US, organised their first meet in San

¹⁷⁴ Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p.156.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Anthony d'Ameida, Sydney September 1996.

¹⁷⁶ 'Afrika Borwa (TOGS) – Officially Affiliated with the FGG', *Federation Forum*, San Francisco, July 1999. This is the official newsletter of the FGG (address – 584 Castro Street, San Francisco, CA, 04114-2594 US).

Diego in 1987.¹⁷⁷ International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics (IGLA), officially formed at Gay Games III, has held annual international championships in swimming during non Gay Games years since this time.

The first two Gay Games also provided a catalyst for gay and lesbian soccer to organise at a national level within the US during the 1980s and a European and international level during the 1990s.¹⁷⁸ The Gay and Lesbian Soccer World Cup was first held in Berlin in 1995.¹⁷⁹ Other international bodies include the International Association of Gay and Lesbian Martial Artists, International Gay Bowling, the International Gay Figure Skating Union, the International Frontrunners, the International Gay and Lesbian Ice Hockey Association and the International Wrestling Alliance.¹⁸⁰ All of these bodies are represented on the 2002 FGG Board of Directors.¹⁸¹

Most of these international bodies have the bulk of their membership and organisational base within North America, although IGLFA and IGLA have built up strength in Europe. IGLFA has representation from all continents of the world. All of these international bodies have elaborate web pages, and the Internet and newsletters keep participants informed of up coming sports competitions, club formations and organisational developments. Teleconferencing, email communication and face-to-

¹⁷⁷ International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics Website: <http://www.igla.org>. Accessed November 17, 2001.

¹⁷⁸ International Gay and Lesbian Football Association Website: <http://www.iglfa.org> Accessed November 17, 2001.

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.iglfa.org> Accessed November 17, 2001.

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.gaygames.org> Accessed November 18, 2001.

¹⁸¹ <http://www.gaygames.org> Accessed November 18, 2001.

face meetings at major sports events enable ongoing communication and democratic decision making to occur.

Political Outcomes of These International and Local Sport Developments

These local to international developments and significant growth in gay and lesbian sport over the past decade have been given inspiration and impetus by the first three Gay Games, and are strongly influenced by the Games inclusive and participative philosophy. The broader Western context of lesbian and gay liberation that fostered gay pride and community formation was the major force shaping these developments. As Jennifer Hargreaves observes, taking part in gay sport and especially in an event of the public magnitude of the Gay Games – entails a political statement – one of ‘coming out’ and identifying publicly as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer – as well as ‘coming in’ to the lesbian and gay community. This act of identification through gay sport ‘ties the individual into an heroic community of resistance’.¹⁸² It is heroic in terms of defining selfhood and community in an affirming manner within a largely hostile and silencing world.

Gay sport largely came about to provide a welcoming, supportive and affirming sports and social environment for gay and lesbian people. The barriers based on prejudice that were overcome by Gay Games organisers have also involved resistance and struggle. Furthermore, the activist projects aimed at reducing and eliminating homophobic and other forms of discrimination and prejudice which organisations like

¹⁸² Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 157.

EGLSF, GISAH and the FGG have pursued entail direct political struggle and engagement. For instance, in 1994 EGLSF published its research into the discrimination experienced by European gay and lesbian sportspersons in the form of a black book. They presented this book to the president of the European Non-Government Sport Organisations (ENGSO) and other national delegates attending a symposium of the Council of Europe that was addressing discrimination in society.¹⁸³

Many sports are popular and accessible leisure pursuits are readily understandable throughout the world. Their engagement is usually viewed as non-political, that is, for pleasure, fitness, achievement and social interaction, rather than political ideology and goals. Ironically, political outcomes are central to the purpose and activities of gay and lesbian sports organisations. The current website of the FGG illustrates this with its two main statements: “Games Can Change The World” and “Global Change Begins With Local Change”. The site also contains a manual that can be downloaded outlining a step- by- step approach on how to organise “A Gay/Lesbian Sports Group”. The manual covers the individual and social benefits derived from building self and community esteem, as well as social connections and identity through “active participation in organised sport”. Through this process internalised and societal homophobia can supposedly be reduced, opportunities for enjoyment and achievement can be created, and links can be made with the growing network of gay and lesbian sport and culture organisations locally and globally.

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EGLSF 1994 *Year Book*. Archived in CSPGGA, VU.

Internationalisation Through Outreach – FGG

FGG has pursued other outreach strategies to expand its reach internationally.

From the first Gay Games, Paul Mart has acted as its roving international ambassador.¹⁸⁴ Mart used his frequent travel as a businessman and film stunt man to inform gay and lesbian associations within a variety of countries about the Gay Games. He claims to have been instrumental in establishing Team Sydney and Melbourne and to have talked about the Games to homosexuals within Poland, South Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The other main outreach officer of the FGG who has used his own money and time to ‘sprook’ for the Gay Games, Derek Liekty, has visited gay and lesbian communities in South America and South Africa.¹⁸⁵ Both Mart and Liekty, both over the age of 65, come from California. As original Gay Games organisers they are strong proponents of gay and lesbian normalisation through the Games. They have been the human face of the international Gay Games movement’s outreach for the past twenty years.

The FGG also has an active Outreach committee which formulates policy, organises activities and reports on developments at the annual meeting.¹⁸⁶ All FGG members are supposed to perform outreach whenever they are visiting less represented parts of the world. Most Federation Directors are relatively affluent, white gay men from North America, Western Europe and Australia. Over the past two years the Outreach

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Mart.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Liekty.

¹⁸⁶ Researcher has participated in three Outreach committee meetings and has the minutes and reports of a number of previous meetings as well as the 1999 and 2000 meetings.

committee initiated and shaped internet resources and recommended a cultural diversity workshop to promote sensitivity to cultural differences and the variety of ways gender and sexuality can play out across the world. At the 1999 Annual FGG Board meeting held in Sydney, consultants from the National Centre for Gender and Cultural Diversity (Swinburne University, Melbourne) were employed to facilitate this workshop.^{187 188}

Much of the effective Outreach for the Gay Games appears to have been achieved through the specific promotion and impetus of the individual Games themselves.

Amsterdam 1998 was the first Gay Games to fund and coordinate a specific Outreach program enabling the participation of 252 people from developing and former Eastern European countries. Outreach and programming for these participants appears to have been culturally sensitive. A more detailed account of this program can be found in the upcoming section of the thesis on the Amsterdam Games.

Global outreach within the international Gay Games movement has been mixed in its achievements and effects. What can be said is the movement itself has grown dramatically over the past twenty years, that sport as a universal language and connector has been central to this growth and that the international movement appeals to and projects a predominantly Western form and image of gay and lesbian identity. This will be elucidated further in the specific sections on the Gay Games of the 1990s.

¹⁸⁷ The researcher has discussed the format and outcome of this workshop with its main facilitator Dr. Zane Ma Rhea.

¹⁸⁸ It was designed as a forum for all to participate, but 30 of the 50 FGG Directors nominated to continue other FGG business whilst the workshop was held.

“Unity ’94”: Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival¹⁸⁹

The ‘Biggest and Brightest’ Gay Olympics?

They were different from all Games that have gone before, and they will probably be different from all Games that will ever follow. Hello Roz. Gay Games IV was glitzy, hyped, fantastic, fabulous, horrid, it was superlative.¹⁹⁰

I think that we thought internally that New York was the media capital of the World, the best, so...the Gay Games in New York have to be the biggest, the brightest and the best and so everything we did, Yankee Stadium, Patti LaBelle. We had media everywhere, we accredited tons and tons of media, we wanted as many sports as possible to be sanctioned legitimising the event.¹⁹¹

The other interesting thing is, the Games organisers really wanted sponsors, they would have sold sponsorship for even less to be able to say that they had sponsors. They wanted, the Olympics are the model for the Gay Games, and the Gay Games are supposed to be as much like the Olympics as possible...what are the things you think of when you think of the Olympics, there is the pageantry, there’s the venues, there’s the sports, there’s the athletes, the spectators and the sponsors and we didn’t have the sponsors, and until we had the sponsors we weren’t gonna be real so we got sponsors.¹⁹²

The Gay Games define us as a coherent, diverse population, asserting our right to celebrate ourselves – not asking for someone else’s approval. It is the ultimate manifestation of self-esteem.¹⁹³

Introduction

These key leaders of, and commentators on Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival encapsulate some of the main themes of these groundbreaking Games – international media profile, commercialisation, sponsorship breakthrough, professionalisation, community diversity and global involvement. These Games were organised to be the

¹⁸⁹ Held from 18–25 June, 1994.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Sheehan.

¹⁹¹ Interview, Roz Quarto, Operations Manager, Gay Games IV.

¹⁹² Interview Harold Levine, Marketing Marketing Manager, Gay Games IV, New York 1996.

¹⁹³ Anne Northrop, Member of the Board of Directors, Gay Games IV. Quoted from Anne Northrop ‘Athletics and Activism’, *Out* (June 1994), p.129.

biggest, glitziest, most visible, most professionally organised, most legitimising Games held so far. Organisers deliberately set out to make the most of what many consider to be the media, commercial, cultural and fashion centre of the world – New York City. Over a million gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, straight and transgender people from around the world attended these Games and the twenty-five year celebration of the Stonewall riot that had been taken up internationally as the watershed event marking gay liberation. This made for very diverse and international participation.¹⁹⁴

Gay Games IV was the Gay Games movement's late capitalist – or postmodern - Gay Olympics.¹⁹⁵ Postmodern in its gendered, sexual, racial, ethnic, national, political, religious and differently abled diversity and its mediated and commercialised format. Olympics in the sense that the organisers and FGG constantly compared the Gay Games to them. It was their Gay Olympics, their showcase of organisational and commercial competence on a grand scale, their opportunity to demonstrate the diversity, talents and dignity of the gay community and their vision of an ideal inclusive sports and cultural mega event, as the Olympics were supposed to be. Being like – or even better – than the Olympics was the ultimate in legitimisation especially for the New York organisers and many of the FGG delegates from the US.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ See *Outrage Correspondents*, 'First We Take Manhattan. Gay Games and Stonewall 25 Taught the World About Tolerance, Diversity and Friendly Competition' *Outrage*, (August 1994), p. 20.

¹⁹⁵ Stonewall 25 was staged directly after Gay Games IV on June 26 1994. It was organised by an entirely separate organisation from that of the New York Gay Games.

¹⁹⁶ The modern Olympic Games is immensely popular around the world and more people watch the televised coverage of this spectacular elite multi-sports mega event than anything else. Because of its widespread and deep resonance, the Olympics have been taken up as the model upon which other sports events are based and compared. Hence, opening and closing ceremonies are often based in part on Olympic rituals. As we saw in chapter 2 the Gay Games was no exception to this. The aura of the Olympics and its legitimising potential is taken up particularly by many of the Gay Games organisers and FGG members who come from the US. This is obvious from the references made to the Olympics

New York City

New York City has been a centre of gay life since the 1890s. Historian George Chauncey documents a 'highly visible, remarkably complex, and continually changing gay male world' that took shape here during the 1890s-1940s.¹⁹⁷ Whilst Chauncey principally documents the gay male world, he also touches on the less public and visible parallel lesbian subcultures within New York at this time.¹⁹⁸ The McCarthy period of gay persecution and post war conservatism had a major impact on this gay life. However, by the 1960s and 1970s it is an integral and vibrant part of city life once again. On moving to New York in 1960 writer Edmund White was excited by the extent of this gay sub-culture – gay restaurants, bars, baths, neighbourhoods.

He writes of this culture as a trendsetter for the rest of America in *States of Desire*,

Travels in Gay America:

New York gays are justifiably proud of their status as taste-makers for the rest of the country...Our clothes and haircuts and records and dance steps and décor – our restlessly evolving style – soon enough become theirs...Now that gay life has become so commercialised and our taste is disseminated with alarming rapidity and the tyranny of instant obsolescence is fuelled by the high octane of greed. All over the county I saw a replication of quite recent New York styles.¹⁹⁹

within interviews as well as in the deliberations of FGG formal and informal meetings that the researcher witnessed. However, it was pointed out clearly in Chapter 2 that the Gay Games is a mass participatory event with many more similarities to the World Masters Games than the elite selection criteria, nationalism and performance standards of the Olympic Games.

¹⁹⁷ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), p. 1.

¹⁹⁸ Fadermann also documents a lesbian sub-culture in New York City during the 1920s, involved in huge drag balls, sexual experimentation and an intellectual community in Greenwich Village and Harlem. A lesbian identity was 'impossible for many women to assume' during this period – but according to Faderman in keeping with the experimentation of the time many women partook of the lifestyle and some started calling themselves 'gay'. In Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, pp. 66-68.

¹⁹⁹ Edmund White, *States of Desire, Travels in Gay America* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980), p. 259.

New York was the place in which the start of gay liberation was supposedly ignited by the Stonewall riots started on the night of June 28, 1969. “Drag queens and kings, many African American and Latino, hustlers, students, gay and lesbians”, who were sick of being constantly harassed by the police, led this conflict.²⁰⁰ This event has taken on mythic significance world wide as the birth of gay liberation. It also had immediate national impact with three hundred Gay Liberation Fronts being created by the end of 1970.²⁰¹ Original Stonewall protesters led the biggest ever gay and lesbian pride march of over one million people. They carried or watched the passage of a mile long rainbow flag along Fifth Avenue to mark the 25th anniversary of this watershed event. This march occurred immediately after Gay Games IV.

New York - Manhattan is a progressive gay friendly city. An estimated one million gays, lesbians and bisexuals live there out of a total population of seven million, many having come from other parts of the US and the world to enjoy its freedom.²⁰² Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25 were given substantial infra-structure support by the city government of New York, including free use of police services, the closing of numerous streets for sports, political marches and functions, the use of Central Park, permission to display Games welcome and direction signs throughout the New York subway system, and vital and legitimating support from two city Mayors. These were the Democrat Mayor David Dinkins and the Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. When the Gay Games were awarded to New York, Dinkins stated with pride that “It is so fitting that these Games are conducted here in New York City where we

²⁰⁰ ‘Stonewall 25 Official Commemorative Guide, June 28 1969 – June 26 1994’, *The List Magazine*, vol. 1 issue. 12 (June 1994), p. 15.

²⁰¹ *The List Magazine*, p.15. Also see Martin Dubberman, *Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (London: Penguin, 1991).

²⁰² Gerard Raymond, ‘Bright Lights, Big City. A Gay and Lesbian Guide to New York, the City That Never Sleeps’, *Campaign*, (Australia, August, 1994), p. 34.

recognise diversity as a critical component of civic strength”.²⁰³ Giuliani used his political clout to secure Yankee stadium for the closing ceremony of the Gay Games. Initially organisers experienced some homophobic opposition to the use of this famous citadel of sport from its manager, and Giuliani came to their assistance.²⁰⁴ Giuliani lent support in several ways; he “publicly scolded one of his prominent backers for attacking the Games and homosexuality”, made an affirming welcome speech at the Games opening ceremony and participated in the main Stonewall march.²⁰⁵

Gay Games IV also received open and affirming support from then US President Clinton, who wrote a warm welcoming message in an official letter of support that appeared in the official Gay Games program. The rhetoric of diversity rights and respect appeared to be substantiated by these symbolic political gestures, and perhaps the strength of gay and lesbian votes and their economic clout was paying dividends.²⁰⁶

Gay Games IV – Setting the Scene.

Gay Games IV engaged approximately 15000 sports and cultural participants in 31 sports events and 130 cultural exhibits/performances. Participants came from 45

²⁰³ *IGTA Newsletter*, Autumn 1993, quoted in Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 163.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Quarto.

²⁰⁵ *The New York Times*, Op-Ed section, (June 18, 1994).

²⁰⁶ The New York Mayors office was interested in the economic impact of this event. The office made a final assessment after the Games, of US \$111 million. Contained in The City of New York, *Economic Impact Estimate For Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival*, dated May 29, 1996. Archived in San Francisco Public Library: Federation of Gay Games Archive, Box 5, Series IV – Gay Games IV Operations, folder no. 32. President Clinton had received significant electoral and financial support from gays and lesbians during his successful Presidential election. See Urvashi Vaid, *Virtual Equality. The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995), pp. 126-127.

countries spanning six continents.²⁰⁷ Whilst the majority of athletes came from the US (7,931) there were medium sized contingents from other Western countries such as Australia (193), Canada (698), England (173), Germany (562) and the Netherlands (216), and smaller groups from Switzerland (87), France (77), Italy (46), New Zealand (60), Norway (34), South Africa (14), Belgium (21) and Japan (15). Representation of 10 and less came from developing nations and former Eastern European countries including Antigua, Bulgaria, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ghana, Guam, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, Slovak Republic, Virgin Islands and Zimbabwe.²⁰⁸ The total number of accredited persons for these Games was 25,000, including 1,200 media personnel, 6,600 volunteers, 1,400 opening and closing ceremony performers and workers, as well as 1,500 officials, coaches and VIPs.²⁰⁹

An elaborate accreditation system, modelled in part on the one used at the smaller World University Games held in Buffalo the previous year, had been especially custom- designed to handle the specific Games requirements and these large numbers.²¹⁰ The event itself had an overall operating budget of US \$6.5 million and, according to the economic impact assessment made by the city of New York, brought

²⁰⁷ Gay Games IV document titled 'Number of Athletes by Country and State. July 29, 1994', official document of Gay Games IV – supplied by Director of Accreditation – Steve Mumby.

²⁰⁸ 'Number of Athletes by Country and State. July 29, 1994'. Archived in Caroline Symons Personal Archive, Victoria University Sunbury campus.

²⁰⁹ Memorandum to Accreditation Committee Members, from 'Harry', Subject: GGIV Accreditation Update (Dated May 7, 1994). Archived in San Francisco Public Library: Federation of Gay Games Archive, Box 5, Series IV, folder 24. This memorandum outlined the estimated number of people that would need to be accredited for Gay Games IV. Being so close to the actual Games (one month out) these figures were reasonably accurate.

²¹⁰ Interviews with Quarto and Steve Mumby. Both of these key staff were responsible for the accreditation system as part of Operations.

over \$111 million US into the local economy.²¹¹ In the six months leading up to the Games approximately 80 paid staff were employed and a further 6,600 volunteers were enlisted to ensure that the big event was staged successfully.²¹²

Sports Program

The 31 sports offered were diverse – with the new additions to the Games program of figure-skating (Ice), inline skating, sports climbing, flag football and the first internationally sanctioned women’s wrestling tournament. Sports such as aerobics, swimming, diving, track and field, power lifting, physique, weightlifting, wrestling, martial arts and cycling were sanctioned by the international or US mainstream sports bodies. Fourteen Masters world records were set at the swimming competition.²¹³ The figure skating competition was the first international event in which same-sex pairs danced together, and strict rules on gender appropriate costumes were ignored. The aerobics competition was the largest on record – gay or straight.²¹⁴ The martial arts tournaments also achieved a number of firsts including:

...the first black belt and above judge in a wheelchair; a disabled competitor who travelled from the Netherlands to compete in both beginner’s form and sparring; a self-defence competition that included judo, aikido and all the major martial arts styles together; women’s beginner, intermediate and advanced divisions so large that they had to be split into three age groups; a new musical form...²¹⁵

Volleyball confirmed its reputation as one of the most popular gay and lesbian sports with one out of every eight of the Games participants being volleyballers, making up

²¹¹ The City of New York, *Economic Impact Estimate For Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival*, dated May 29, 1996.

²¹² Interview Quarto (Operations Manager)

²¹³ Lisa Labrecque (ed.), *Unity: A Celebration of Gay Games IV and Stonewall* (San Francisco: Labrecque Publishing, 1994), p. 18.

²¹⁴ Labrecque (ed.), *Unity*, p. 58.

²¹⁵ Labrecque (ed.), *Unity*, p .60.

the largest queer tournament to be held internationally.²¹⁶ The physique competition also set participation records with the 265 muscular athletes entered establishing a new mark for all international physique events (gay or straight). Along with the figure skating, swimming and volleyball, it proved the most popular with spectators and attracted 3,500 to New York's Paramount Theatre for the finals.²¹⁷ Most sports advertised that they catered for novice, recreational and elite athletes through the provision of different competition divisions and masters age groupings.

The emphasis on large record breaking sports events and the pursuit of official sanctioning of as many sports as possible by the organisers of these Gay Games appears to indicate a shift towards more competitive and high performance based sport. This development was not official policy; Operations Manager, Roz Quarto, explained it as principally an exercise in legitimisation. Few mainstream sports bodies initially understood what the Gay Games were. According to Quarto: "there was this view that when they (official sports organisations) would get a cold call from us they would respond Gay Games what do you do, play jacks?"²¹⁸ She suggested that this response was probably based on homophobia as well as ignorance, and that the most successful sports events had gay and lesbian organisers who built on their strong and positive personal connections with mainstream sports organisations and/or used these organisations to give their event "credibility, more respect and less hassles".²¹⁹

Considering these organisational difficulties, the magnitude and success of the sports events was an achievement of these Gay Games. This shift was also justified by

²¹⁶ Labrecque (ed.), *Unity*, p. 52.

²¹⁷ Labrecque (ed.) *Unity*, p. 118.

²¹⁸ Interview with Quarto.

²¹⁹ Interview with Quarto.

organisers because it gave high performers like ex-Olympic gold medallist Bruce Hayes an opportunity to do their personal best. It was seen to further legitimise the Gay Games through placing it on the sporting map with world record sports performances.²²⁰ Gay and lesbian sport champions had a unique opportunity to be 'out and proud', achieve sporting excellence and be celebrated as gay and lesbian heroes at the Gay Games.

At the same time, there were some ominous signs that high performance sport, with its enshrinement of hyper-competitiveness and winning - was gaining a strong foothold within the Games. One sign of this development was the introduction of drug testing in the physique and power lifting events where sixteen athletes were tested positive for the use of anabolic steroids. Another was Gay Games IV's heavy reliance on celebrity sporting champions in its marketing and promotion campaign. This may also have had a contradictory effect on its efforts to attract novice sports participants. One of the early leaders of the Gay Games movement, Larry Sheehan found the 'sport for all' ethos, which was so important to the original founders of the Gay Games, was on the wane:

In New York I saw and heard too many instances of people participating in athletics events who felt they should not have had to compete against other participants who were not as good as them, who were not of the same quality, I heard it three or four times myself, I heard it told to me by other people, so I'm not sure the message got across as loudly about the original principles of the Games in New York as had originally, as were important to me and I think that in some ways given the amount of hype, I think to get the amount of attention that you would through the Martina Navratilovas and Greg Louganis and the Bruce Hayes, that you have to have that kind of focus or attention to get that kind of coverage, but then it gets beyond the control of the Games...²²¹

²²⁰ Interview with Quarto and with one of the principal organisers of the swimming competition at Gay Games IV, Charlie Carson, New York, December 1996.

²²¹ Interview with Sheehan.

A more elitist competitive ethos and an emphasis on sporting legends appeared to contradict the central Gay Games tenants of inclusion and participation.

Diversity

Whilst the Gay Games can be seen as an event significantly numbered by white middle class gay men - as many large sports events and gay events are - there appears to have been a broad cross section of 'the community' represented.²²² All sorts of stereotypes classically haunting 'the community' were both undermined and reinforced at these Games. For instance, athletes living with HIV competed, won medals and broke masters world records.²²³ A special waiver of the immigration regulation disallowing HIV positive visitors from entering the US was successfully organised by the Games organisers for the duration of the Gay Games.²²⁴ A specific task force ensured that the medical and comfort requirements of those with HIV and AIDS were met.²²⁵

People with disabilities were integrated into the sports program. After consultation with the transgendered community of New York, a liberal policy concerning the participation of transgendered athletes was formulated.²²⁶ Lesbian feminist collective soccer and softball teams played by day, partied at night and participated in the

²²² Participants need to be reasonably well off to be able to travel to a Masters or Gay Games, especially if it is an international event. For a photographic account of the diversity of participants and performances at the Games see Labrecque, (ed.) *Unity*.

²²³ Labrecque, (ed.) *Unity*, pp. 78-80.

²²⁴ See Chapter 4 of this thesis for more details.

²²⁵ See Chapter 4 for more details.

²²⁶ See Chapter six.

lesbian strength march.²²⁷ Women and men figure skated in same sex and mixed pairs, whilst burly gay men donned the American football attire for a heated game of flag football.²²⁸ Drag Queens enjoyed their moment in the spotlight as the team and country placard carriers at the Opening ceremony.²²⁹ The heterosexual team President of gay- identified swim team West Hollywood Aquatic, Andrea DeVuono, won a number of swimming medals and broke a few world masters records.²³⁰

A plethora of sporting sub-cultures and cultural expressions were involved with Gay Games IV. These included the lesbian feminist informed Hackney soccer team and the high camp Pink Flamingo performance at the swimming. I interviewed one of the Hackney players who participated in Gay Games VI.²³¹ Heather put another slant on the meaning of sport for the more politically active lesbian feminist soccer player. Her team, Hackney, participated in Gay Games IV and contested the local London women's league as the first 'out' lesbian soccer team. The club itself was organised on feminist collective principles. The majority of decisions within the club were made by consensus involving all club members, there were very few appointed positions and these were mainly in place to satisfy the constitutional and reporting requirements of the 'mainstream' league. These collective principles also encompassed the spirit of play, with an emphasis being on encouraging the involvement of women from all skill levels, concentrating on positive achievements rather than denigrating poor

²²⁷ From interview with a Hackney women's soccer team member – Heather (pseudonym), London, December 1996.

²²⁸ Labrecque, (ed.) *Unity*, pp. 30-35.

²²⁹ Labrecque, (ed.) *Unity*, p. 9.

²³⁰ Andrea set World Masters records in the 50 and 100 metres backstroke events for women 30-34 years. Terry Allison discussed the issue of heterosexual involvement in the Gay Games and cited Andrea as an example of their inclusion. At the time Alison was the delegate on the FGG representing IGLA. Interview, San Diego, November 1994. See 'Swimming Records Set At Gay Games IV'.

Archived in SFPL, GGA, Box no. 22, series XII, folder no. 25- Swimming.

²³¹ Interview with (participant) Heather, London, December 1996.

performance, emphasising the process and pleasure of the game rather than the outcome and advocating equal opportunity policies and practices that recognised economic, racial and sexual minority disadvantage within the club as well as the league. Competition and glory were secondary to these principles at least in the formative years of the club before it started winning!

Heather witnessed the splitting of the club into new lesbian teams through disagreements over political issues such as racism, the public display of S/M dress symbols by some team members, and how competitively and politically focused Hackney should be. Some players believed in the old myth that ‘sport and politics don’t mix’ and were there ‘just to play’ football. For a dedicated lesbian feminist, politics is everywhere and especially prescient in the ‘patriarchal’ world of sport. Furthermore, an encompassing feminist explanation of domination and power within patriarchal society and a transformative politics that seeks to eradicate such power within the everyday lives of lesbian adherents produces strong commitment and seriousness to a view of the world that is radically different and threatening especially to people content with patriarchy. That is why a team such as Hackney envisaged an alternative ethos and organisation of sport.

Heather also recounted some of the difficulties the lesbian identified and politicised club experienced within the ‘mainstream’ league:

we basically pushed all sorts of equality issues in meetings and say at this match we went to last week so and so was racist to so and so and what are we (the league) going to do about it? And the league would say ‘what do you mean what are we going to do about it, that’s not football’... But then they did slowly take a different approach which was more like, kind of token acknowledgment of allowing you to say it but then not doing anything about it. And we got less aggression but we were just kind of marginalised. But then a couple of teams set up and some other individual women, dykes in other

teams started to be more out as well. And the focus wasn't on us. They still haven't got any kind of equal opportunity policy as far as I know. The league is still run by about eight white men and two white women. And still most of the other teams are run by men. We weren't the only out dyke team, we were the only all women run team and both of these things were a bigger threat.²³²

The Hackney women's soccer team pursued a number of equal opportunity and social justice issues within the 'mainstream league', including discrimination on the grounds of gender, race and sexuality.

There are North American and Australian counterparts to this alternative lesbian feminist collectivist way of organising and engaging in sport. For instance, the Flying Bats soccer team based in Sydney, the Amazon Games held annually in Melbourne, the Notso Amazons Softball League which began in Toronto in 1984, and an array of lesbian softball teams playing in the US.²³³ The philosophies of lesbian sports participants and teams vary from the very competitive, to the having fun and to the encouragement and collective involvement of all - and whatever politics these approaches entail. However, it does appear that some of the most politically informed attempts to transform sport have occurred within lesbian sporting communities, and perhaps these efforts for cooperative, expressive, process - oriented sport are some of the unique cultural markers of these particular sexual and sporting communities.

²³² Interview with Heather.

²³³ Helen Lenskyj, 'Sexuality and Femininity in Sport Contexts: Issues and Alternatives', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (Nov. 1994), pp. 364-376 and Susan Birrell, & Diane Richter, 'Is a Diamond Forever? Feminist Transformations of Sport', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 10, no.4 (1987), pp. 395 -g le sbian and feminist softball leagues in Canada and the US respectively. Mary Boson discusses the Flying Bats soccer team within Sydney in 'Dykes on Spikes', *Sydney Star Observer* (August 21, 1997), pp. 10-11. The Flying Bats play in the Gladesville-Hornsby Women's Soccer Association competition situated in outer Sydney. The Amazon Games are a one day multi sport festival for girls and women, organised by a collective of women. The Notso Amazon Softball League is a women only recreational league for lesbian and lesbian-positive women.

The Pink Flamingo has become a tradition within the swimming program of the Gay Games since 1990, and captures the playful camp culture especially within the gay male community. The Pink Flamingo was invented by gay swimmers and does stand out in its capacity to demonstrate some of the wonderfully playful, theatrical and camp traditions of gay life as well as its deepest concerns. This event had its origins at the first Gay Games after competition party when a swimmer from New York, Charlie Carson, dressed up as Esther Williams led by two chariot dogs - two swimmers from Los Angeles - who had leashes made of the medals they had won.²³⁴ Carson finished his performance with his rendition of 'Sea Animals of the World' in the nearby pool. The Pink Flamingo developed into a major drag performance and relay involving the carrying of tacky plastic pink flamingos as batons. It has become more elaborate each year. The swimming competition can be a particularly technical and serious affair, and the drag relay provided an antidote with frivolity and humour.

Theatrical parody with scripted skits and aquatic passion feasts performed during an Easter International gay and lesbian swim meet, and elaborate and moving rituals commemorating fellow swimmers who had died from AIDS performed at the New York games, has also marked the evolution of the Pink Flamingo. At the Amsterdam Games, the West Hollywood team played out the creation of Amsterdam, dressed up as shimmering water, along with a Queen, a dike and the boy who saved the town from flooding!

²³⁴ P. Sowers, 'Think Pink' *Gay Games IV Aquatics Program* (1994), pp. 30-31. Charles Carson, the competition manager for swimming at Gay Games IV, gave me this program. This drag performance was performed at a private party. It was not an official part of the Gay Games I program. Archived in VU: CSGGPA.

The Pink Flamingo has not attracted as much interest from the lesbian swimmers as the exaggeration of conventionally 'desirable' femininity performed with drag - make-up, big hair, mincing walks, huge breasts and the like - can be quite alienating. However, women were with the water ballet performances commemorating swimmers who had died of AIDS. The latter mirrored the evolving integration of lesbians and gay men working together particularly around issues of HIV/AIDS in the wider community. And there have been the occasional all women's Pink Flamingo teams like the West Hollywood women donning men's suits stuffed with paper towels to make huge bulges in their pants. These women stripped down and positioned their inflatable guitar batons between their legs to swim backstroke down the pool, the guitars resembling a giant phallus "like something out of a John Waters film".²³⁵

The Pink Flamingo is a highlight at the annual International Gay and Lesbian Aquatic championships and the Gay Games, and has become a tradition of many other more local lesbian and gay swim competitions in North America, Europe and Australia.²³⁶

It engenders intense preparation, camaraderie and hilarity and makes the 'mainstream' masters swimming events seem mundane in comparison.

Camp - a central feature of the Pink Flamingo - is a distinct cultural form of which many gay men are the chief proponents. Susan Sontag, in her celebrated essay on camp, made this observation: "Not all homosexuals have Camp taste. But homosexuals, by and large, constitute the vanguard - and the most articulate audience

²³⁵ Sowers, 'Think pink', pp. 30-31.

²³⁶ It tends to be adapted to local conditions too. At the Australian Gaymes held in Melbourne in January 1998 pink blow up swans were used along with canoes and various other aquatic craft. I convened this event and speak as an eyewitness.

-of Camp”.²³⁷ In his encyclopaedia on ‘Camp’ entitled *Camp: The Lie That Tells the Truth* Phillip Core describes its essence: “There are only two things essential to camp: a secret within the personality which one ironically wishes to conceal and exploit, and a peculiar way of seeing things, affected by spiritual isolation...”²³⁸ Gay men have historically lived secret lives, for the most part within a hidden world, with passing and concealment being necessary everyday survival strategies. At the same time as being estranged from the larger society, they have also craved acceptance within it and the uncovering of their world. The use of irony is one strong solution to this alienating dilemma.

Another important paradox of living as a gay man is the stigmatisation of not being considered a ‘real man’ within the orthodox, patriarchal gender order and thus being an outsider to it, whilst also desiring and revering the dominant sex. Pronger points out that by not participating fully in the orthodox culture one becomes an outsider, a stance that is traditionally ironic.²³⁹ As outsiders, many gay men can play with the myths of the orthodox gendered culture. Camp also involves style, exaggeration and extravagance, the exposure of ‘naturalness’. In Sontag’s words: “Camp sees everything in quotation marks”.²⁴⁰ The Pink Flamingo relay is an excellent example of the expression of theatricality, drag and camp in the cultural life of gay men - this being created in a sporting context rather than the usual pub and dance club performance.

²³⁷ Susan Sontag, ‘Notes on ‘Camp’’, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar Straus and Grioux, 1966), p. 290.

²³⁸ Phillip Core, *The Lie That Tells the Truth* (New York: Delilah Books, 1984), p. 9.

²³⁹ Pronger, *Arena of Masculinity: Sport, Homosexuality, and the Meaning of Sex* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 71-73.

²⁴⁰ Sontag ‘Notes on ‘Camp’’, p. 280.

Of course, not all gay men do camp, even fewer dress up in drag and there are a number of sports cultures at the Gay Games where an event such as the Flamingo would be right out of place. Gay men who are not comfortable with their homosexuality and their stigmatised place in the patriarchal gender order are less likely to take pleasure in the camp irony of the Pink Flamingo. So too would gay men who revere traditional masculinity and who have found their way back to sport because it allows them the expression and the community of this masculinity amongst other like - minded gay men.

In contrast to feminist collectivist soccer teams and camp aquatics, there was the more traditional San Francisco wrestling club that attempted to maximise their competitive advantage by keeping separate from their competitors in training and socialising. An African-American wrestler from San Francisco, who attended the Vancouver and New York Games and joined FGG as a Team San Francisco delegate after the Vancouver Games, remembers a much more competitive, medal focused sports environment realised by his wrestling team:

There were several rivalries going on between wrestlers from San Francisco, New York, LA, there were some from France and other places. We were the biggest contingent. Like we didn't really talk to anybody. Gene (coach) kept us separate from other people, you know he was building the mystique...Our people wanted to win medals and we liked the idea of keeping ourselves separate from the other wrestlers, but we were friendly with them but we didn't want to give away any secrets.²⁴¹

Winston's wrestling team went so far as to rent a space in Vancouver so that they could practise separately from the other teams and not give away any of their moves on the wrestling mat.

²⁴¹ Interview with Winston Mathis, San Francisco November 1996.

The competition was very fierce but everyone partied afterward. According to Winston's coach the team received some criticism for being isolated like this, as it was seen as going against the ethos of the Gay Games.²⁴² Coach Gene Dermody was proud of his conservative political beliefs and affiliations and asserted that gay men should be able to develop and practice their masculine embodiment through sport, and experience male bonding through its homosociability. Playing sport at the Gay Games and providing an environment where a variety of sensibilities and abilities can be accommodated can mean very different things to participants.

The commonality most understandable to all of these gay and lesbian sporting communities were the standardised rules and processes of their sport, their shared enjoyment in its parameters of play and achievement, and their ability to express their gayness openly.

Celebrities

Lesbian and gay sporting greats were deployed to raise money as well as the profile of the Games and the pride of the participants. Greg Louganis officially 'came out' in a video shown at the opening ceremony of these Games, saying that it felt good "to be out and proud".²⁴³ Operations manager Roz Quarto mentioned the efforts made by key Games organisers to convince Louganis of the value of being 'out and proud' for the Games.²⁴⁴ He also performed a diving exhibition before the diving competition,

²⁴² Interview with Dermody.

²⁴³ James C. McKinley Jr. 'Louganis Still Performs Like Gold' *The New York Times*, Sports (Tuesday June 21, 1994).

²⁴⁴ Interview with Quarto.

and was one of the Games diving commentators.²⁴⁵ There was a major fundraising dinner organised to honour Martina Navratilova, and she became one of the main Gay Games patrons. US Olympic gold medal swimmer Bruce Hayes and women's world tennis great, Billie Jean King, were also prominent in Gay Games IV promotional and fund raising efforts. Up until then, very few athletes at this elite level had publicly declared their homosexuality, and these sporting luminaries provided some important role models for gay and lesbian sports enthusiasts.

In the spirit of Broadway, New York also featured the queer celebrity in its cultural festival. Classic British theatre and film actor and Hollywood star, Sir Ian McLellan, performed a one-man play that he had especially written for the festival – *A Knight at the Lyceum*.²⁴⁶ One of the United States' leading contemporary dance ensembles, Bill T. Jones/ Arnie Zane Dance Company, which was renowned for its social, political and homoerotic work, premiered the moving racial and gay themed performance 'After Black Room'.²⁴⁷ Celebrity comedian Sandra Bernhart received top billing for her show at Carnegie Hall.²⁴⁸ Famous gay actor and writer Quentin Crisp made himself visible at a variety of shows throughout the Games week, and he hosted an afternoon tea party in the west village.²⁴⁹ Prima-donna drag queens provided a glittering night at New Yorks Town Hall in "Dressing Up! The Ultimate Dragfest".²⁵⁰ A groundbreaking historical exhibition of New York's lesbian and gay

²⁴⁵ James C. McKinley Jr. 'Louganis Still Performs Like Gold'.

²⁴⁶ 'The Games Guide', *Out Magazine* (June 1994), p. 58. All of these celebrity events and performances are listed in 'The Games Guide'.

²⁴⁷ Anne Kisselgoff, 'Revealing the Universal Amid Specifics' *The New York Time The Arts Section, Dance Review*, (Tuesday June 21, 1994).

²⁴⁸ Labrecque, (ed.) *Unity*, pp. 124 - 131.

²⁴⁹ Labrecque, (ed.) *Unity* p. 130.

²⁵⁰ Labrecque, (ed.) *Unity*, p. 131.

communities, “Becoming Visible, the Legacy of Stonewall”, was the major display at the New York Public Library.

The theme of visibility on a grand scale was also obvious when ‘the largest international lesbian and gay band ever’ played at the “Here and Now” concert held with much fanfare at Madison Square Garden.²⁵¹ The parade of celebrities continued in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games with Cindi Lauper and Patti LaBelle. During Stonewall 25 a large contingent of well-known American movie, music and media celebrities – straight and gay – entertained and made political speeches advocating gay rights to an audience of hundreds of thousands of participants. These celebrities included: Lisa Minnelli, supermodel and MTV star RuPaul, actors Judith Light and Kathy Najimy and writer Armistead Maupin among others. The significant and internationalising influence of the US culture industry and the international predominance of the US gay and lesbian rights movement since Stonewall, was certainly prevalent throughout these Gay Games.

Media

New York City was known as an international media centre, and Gay Games IV Executive Director Jay Hill and Operations manager, Quarto, wanted to capitalise on this geography to place the Gay Games well and truly ‘on the map’.²⁵² Using

²⁵¹ Labrecque (ed.) *Unity*, p. 124.

²⁵² Interview with Quarto. Jay Hill was on vacation when the researcher visited New York to interview Gay Games organisers. Fortunately Hill was interviewed by Judith Cramer for a doctoral study of media coverage during Gay Games IV. The substance of this interview and analysis of media coverage is published in her dissertation: *We’re Here, We’re Queer’: Breaking the Silence with Gay Games IV*. The Union Institute, Graduate School, US, 1996. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, UMI Dissertation Services, 1996).

celebrities to attract positive publicity was one of the strategies used by the Public Relations staff working in the Gay Games office. A pre-Games profile was considered vital for attracting potential participants, especially from the US. Positive Gay Games coverage was actively sought to provide a 'more accurate' picture of the diverse and productive community participating in these Games and Cultural Festival.

This coverage was considered important for gay and straight audiences. It supposedly enabled self-recognition, identification with the Gay Games and affirmed many gay, lesbian and queer peoples. It was also thought to be educational - breaking down stereotypes, and the limited and often distorted views of this diverse community.

Human interest stories that had local appeal featured alongside the celebrity stories.

For example, Hill cited the press coverage of the African-American lesbian grandmother who competed in the first ever officially sanctioned women's wrestling event in the presence of her extended family. Also featured was a lesbian couple from Akron, Ohio, who trained for two years for the triathlon in the lead up to the Games by pushing their toddler son around in a 'carriage'.²⁵³ In keeping with the participative spirit of the Gay Games as 'sport for all' (not an elite sports championships) the Public Relations staff pushed these unique stories of participants, their enjoyment, achievement and challenges. According to Hill, getting these kinds of stories published was no easy task, and they appeared in the lifestyle and business sections of papers rather than the sports sections.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Hill cited in Cramer, *We're Here, We're Queer*, p. 71.

²⁵⁴ Cramer, *We're Here, We're Queer*, p. 71.

The Public Relations team targeted mainstream and alternative print media including: *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The New York Daily News*, *New York Newsday*, *The New York City Post*, *The San Francisco Examiner*, *The Village Voice*, *The Washington Blade* and a plethora of other gay and lesbian newspapers throughout the US and within Western cities of the world with established gay and lesbian communities. Front page and editorial coverage appeared in the influential and internationally known broadsheet *The New York Times*. According to Cramer *USA Today* published the sports results alongside the mainstream sports news.²⁵⁵

Television coverage was also sought after, however, Cramer did not discuss the extent of coverage. Considering the magnitude and uniqueness of Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25, including the celebrities, colour, drama, politics and world masters records- these events would probably have received some televised news coverage within the US. Australian television broadcaster SBS carried news items on the Games during the week it was held. In comparison with previous Gay Games, the extent of media coverage of Gay Games IV was significantly increased. Cramer concludes that the Games became more visible to the gay and lesbian community worldwide and throughout the US media.²⁵⁶

The quality of this coverage was also impressive. The editorial that appeared in *The New York Times* at the conclusion of the Gay Games and Stonewall 25 conveys the impact of these events and their media coverage on the local populace:

June has been an enlightening, and enlightened month in New York City, Gotham's citizens could hardly turn on their television sets or ride the

²⁵⁵ Cramer, *'We're Here, We're Queer'*, p. 71.

²⁵⁶ Cramer, *'We're Here, We're Queer'*, p. 73.

subways without encountering some aspect of the astoundingly large gay presence that had converged on the city.²⁵⁷

The editorial discussed the history and importance of gay rights within the US and the ways that Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25 contributed to the furtherance of these human rights. It concludes with a description of one of the key impacts these events had on their participants:

Many participants found the experience profoundly liberating, a mass statement that their movement had arrived and could never be shoved back in the closet. As one organiser said: “We will never turn back. We will never be invisible again”.²⁵⁸

The alternative press tended to be more critical of the Gay Games, much to the disappointment of Jay Hill.²⁵⁹ With the aim of providing a variety of perspectives *The Village Voice* employed writers from a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints, including some who were opposed to the Games on political grounds.²⁶⁰ The managing editor of *The Washington Blade* was critical of the way the Games organisers essentially censored events such as swimming’s Pink Flamingo Relay by asking that reporters not cover it. Underlying this censorship by the swimming event organisers was the fear of presenting negative stereotypes - of gay men being queenie and effeminate. The editor considered this “odd”. The “sense of humour and joy” of this event could not be captured for a broader audience and it implied that: “we would have our rights if you extreme people weren’t so visible”.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ For the start of the Games see ‘Recognising gay athletes’, *The New York Times*, OP-ED page, (Saturday June 18, 1994) and on the conclusion to the Games and Stonewall 25 see Editorial ‘Invisible people, made visible’ *The New York Times* (Tuesday June 28), 1994.

²⁵⁸ Editorial ‘Invisible People, Made Visible’

²⁵⁹ Cramer, ‘We’re Here, We’re Queer’, p. 73.

²⁶⁰ Cramer, ‘We’re Here, We’re Queer’, p. 95.

²⁶¹ Managing Editor of *The Washington Blade*, June 1994, interviewed by Cramer and quoted in her dissertation, p. 99.

Hill attributed the more critical outlook taken by the alternative press to a major difference in viewpoint on what constituted the political:

I think that a lot of alternative press sees the political as serious and they didn't see the Games as political. To me the beauty of the Games was that it wasn't overtly political...it wasn't necessarily smacking anyone in the face, but a lot of people who ordinarily wouldn't have dialogues... wouldn't work with gays and lesbians actually did because it was through this sports and arts kind of form.²⁶²

For Hill the Games were politically effective by not being explicitly political.

Sports and cultural entertainment can often be construed as less serious, sometimes even an indulgent distraction from the real political struggles of gay and lesbian rights, the life-defending efforts of activists and the aligned long term political campaigns of women's groups, minority groups and the poor and under-privileged. So it is understandable how some writers may see the Games as non-political. The political nature of the Gay Games, which were visible in its overall impacts within GLBT communities and mainstream society as well as being a driving force within the community basis of the Games very organisation, will be examined subsequently.

Organisation

From the outset Gay Games IV, as with previous Games, had its roots within the local gay and lesbian community. Its first co-President, Tom Cracovia, who had been to Gay Games I and II, found these experiences affirming and life changing, and was inspired to begin the first organisational steps for Gay Games IV.²⁶³ A bid committee

²⁶² Hill, quoted in Cramer, '*We're Here, We're Queer*', p. 73. Sheehan, Quarto, Allison and Kelly made the same position on the more benign, acceptable and effective political nature of the Gay Games in their interviews.

²⁶³ Interview with Tom Cracovia, New York City, December 1996.

was organised to research, fund and put together the successful New York bid.²⁶⁴ This committee evolved into the Board of Management for Gay Games IV. An Executive Director, Paula Pressley, was employed three years out from the Games to begin fundraising and promotion.²⁶⁵ Gay Games IV had a projected budget of over six million dollars, which included staff salaries, all to be raised by the Games itself. Jay Hill's appointment as Executive Director in 1992 marked a period of acceleration in fundraising and organisational output and the Games organisational structure was also consolidated.²⁶⁶

Eighteen months out from the Gay Games nine full time staff were employed in the office, and thirteen policy making committees made up of volunteer community members covered the following organisational areas: Sports, HIV, Disability, Cultural Festival, Ceremonies, Ticketing, Legal, Volunteers, Administration, Marketing and Fundraising, Community Liaison, Development, Communication and Outreach.²⁶⁷ In the last six months leading up to the Games over 75 paid staff and over 6,000 volunteers, mainly from the local gay and lesbian community of New York were in operations mode.²⁶⁸

Paid management staff sat on a number of designated policy committees to give professional advice as well as to gain ideas and policy direction.²⁶⁹ Operations manager Quarto and her counterpart Ellen Markowitz had the task of guiding and

²⁶⁴ Led by Tom Cracovia and Karen Maurenbaum. Maurenbaum also went on to be the co-President of the New York Gay Games Board of Management.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Mart.

²⁶⁶ Cramer, *'We're Here, We're Queer'*, pp. 63-69.

²⁶⁷ Interview with Quarto, committees are listed in the official Gay Games program.

²⁶⁸ 'Gay Games IV Score Card # 1', *Out*, (June 1994), p. 97.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Quarto.

overseeing the 60 sports Co-Chairs and their organising committees as well as the 60 sports venue managers.²⁷⁰ Games accreditation, risk management and security, medical policy and support, transportation, hosted housing, signage and the operations centre also came under this Operations portfolio. So as not to ‘reinvent the wheel’ and be professional in the provision of these complex operational areas, Quarto studied the operations plans for the Olympics, the Pan American Games and the World University Games (WUG).²⁷¹ She also attended the WUG in Buffalo to see operations management first hand and sought advice from the WUG Operations team.

This appears to have been the first time that the Gay Games management modelled Games planning and organisation on other similarly high profile and professionally staged events. Such professionalisation was essential considering the size and scope of Gay Games IV, the requirement to raise such a large budget with no financial government assistance and the situational and self-generated media attention, public, government and international scrutiny of a Games that was to be held in New York.

The politics of diversity and difference also appears to have been an influential force within the day-to-day life of the Gay Games office and management. According to Quarto, there were contentious issues around gender, race and equity amongst office staff.²⁷² Some staff members were critical of management, claiming that the Gay Games policies and practices were not inclusive enough of women or minorities. The vast committee structure that engaged the local GLBT community in the policy

²⁷⁰ Interview with Quarto and Ellen Markowitz. Continuing with the policy of having male and female Co-Chairs wherever possible for all committees and positions of responsibility the 30 sports and venues had two Co-Chairs each.

²⁷¹ Interview with Quarto.

²⁷² Interview with Quarto.

deliberation of the Games also generated some political differences. Such difference politics is an essential part of an event that has its well-spring within very diverse communities.

Key Games management staff members who desired to organise a professional and commercially successful Gay Games also had to take into account this strong community basis of the Gay Games. Sometimes mainstreaming concerns such as projecting 'safe' images of gay people to the wider public, attracting major sponsors who appear to be interested only in the more affluent and 'respectable' male segment of the queer community, and concerns with economic impacts and other legitimating business outcomes, clashed with the more radical outlooks of GLBT community politics.

For instance, there was opposition from within and outside of the Games organisation to the emphasis placed on the commercialisation of the Gay Games. Some staff saw the Gay Games as principally a community event, not a commercial enterprise.²⁷³ An activist group of lesbians demonstrated against the Games, picketing Games venues, distributing critical information and wearing T-shirts with the slogan – "Movement Not Market". During the political parades of Stonewall 25 anti-commercialisation statements were made from a variety of community groups including: 'fuck lesbian chic' and 'Stonewall was a riot, not a trademark'.²⁷⁴ Community politics also contributed to the shaping of diversity sensitive and inclusive policies and practices of Gay Games IV.

²⁷³ Interview with Levine.

²⁷⁴ Kimberley O'Sullivan, 'Stonewall', *Campaign*, (August 1994), p. 34. This is an Australian Gay Magazine published by Bluestone media Group, Melbourne.

Diversity Inclusive Policies and Practices

By Gay Games IV, bisexual, transgender and queer people had been added to the list of communities included within the overarching ‘gay and lesbian community’ of New York and other Western, cosmopolitan cities. Building on the efforts of past Gay Games, inclusive policies, practices and promotional efforts were directed at a number of disadvantaged and minority groups within the broader gay and lesbian community, including women, blacks, people with disabilities and HIV and AIDS, as well as transgendered people. Differently abled people and those living with HIV and AIDS were more comprehensively represented within the policy making and organisational structures of Gay Games IV and within the sporting and cultural program of these Games than in any previously. This was the first Gay Games to have a transgender participation policy – one that had been finalised through the political intervention of transgender activists.²⁷⁵ A limited hosted housing scheme and a scholarships program subsidising economically disadvantaged people who wanted to participate in the Games were also implemented by Gay Games IV organisers.²⁷⁶

These were progressive social justice policies for an international mega-event that was entirely self-funded. By comparison, the sports event most similar to the Gay Games – the state funded World Masters Games – does not have the equivalent inclusive policies.²⁷⁷ However, such progressive policies cannot overcome the

²⁷⁵ See chapter six.

²⁷⁶ The scholarship program covered the registration fees of those who could prove significant hardship. There were 1,000 requests for hosted housing. Just over 250 New Yorkers opened their houses to visitors during the Games as part of this scheme.

²⁷⁷ There appears to have been no comparable policies and programs during the World Masters Games (WMG) held in Brisbane Australia in 1994. The researcher participated in this event along with 25,000 others, most of them from Brisbane and surrounds. Age and gender are the main areas of

significant systemic socio-economic, cultural and political differences that disadvantage women and minorities within society and sport generally and that underline these peoples reduced ability to participate in the Gay Games. For instance, women within the US earn on average 60-70% of the male average wage and lesbians are more likely to have responsibility for dependents. This can have a financial and social impact on lesbian participation. Whilst the female participation rate at these Games, which was 38% of all registered athletes, compares favourably with other similar multi-sport events, it is also reflective of these socio-economic differences.

The racial and ethnic background of participants was not officially recorded, however, according to Hargreaves it could be argued that there “has been a higher representative percentage of Black, Asian and Latina lesbians from the US in the Gay Games than there are Black, Asian and Latina women in the mainstream Olympics”.²⁷⁸ Comparative demographics of this kind for men at the Gay Games are also unclear. Quarto reflects on race and gender inequality within society and sport and its impact on the political energies and loyalties of people who suffer multiple layers of discrimination. In her words,

Does a black woman who has an hour free work on black emancipation issues or lesbian and gay rights issues, that’s a hard thing. And then black women in sport generally, that’s probably a much lower percentage than white women, white men, black men. I think that no matter how many resources we put to it we can’t fix it and it is our job to be inviting, provide an inviting atmosphere,

inclusion at these Games and the oldest participant was a 100 year old Brisbane women who swam in the 50 meters freestyle event. The World Masters Games to be held in Melbourne in 2002 does no specific marketing to women and minorities, and its primary target of inclusion is based on age and gender. Sexuality, ethnicity, disability and transgender inclusiveness are not made explicit or implicit in the participation policies of these Games. A broad mainstream marketing policy is considered adequate. Based on conversations with the marketing division of the WMG, Melbourne and the marketing and entry information sent to the researcher. These WMG’s were significantly funded and supported by the Queensland and Victorian Governments. They are seen as important revenue raisers and ‘healthy lifestyle’ promoters.

²⁷⁸ Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 159.

do some outreach...but I'm not sure that we can fix whatever causes the problem.²⁷⁹

The ways that New York organisers specifically promoted the Games to minorities within the GLBT communities of the US, or provided 'an inviting atmosphere' were not apparent in the interviews or archival material. Gay Games V organisers pursued an integrated and comprehensive women's policy that achieved 50% female participation amongst European Games registrants. Such a dedicated and systematic approach was not adopted during Gay Games IV. However, the community diversity represented within the sport, cultural and events programs of these Games appeared much greater than in previous Games. In this perhaps it can be said that Gay Games IV was the first Games to represent the diversity of the developing GLBT community coalition within its organisational politics, inclusive policies, its programming and its public face. In addition, organisers placed a great deal of emphasis on the commercial legitimacy and success of Gay Games IV. To this we now turn.

Sponsorship and Commercialisation

Gay Games IV achieved impressive firsts in its sponsorship breakthrough for the gay and lesbian market within the US marketing and merchandise consultant Harold Levine was employed full time as the Games marketing manager eighteen months out from the event.²⁸⁰ Armed with figures of economic impact from the Mayor's office, pictures of gay affluence from Gay marketing firm Overlooked Opinions and impressive demographics on the size and spending power of this community Levine, Hill and other staff members with expertise in sponsorship and marketing approached

²⁷⁹ Interview with Quarto.

²⁸⁰ Interview with Levine.

a variety of potential sponsors. Levine described this spending power as being greater than the Asian and Hispanic markets within the United States.²⁸¹

They initially found that companies were very nervous about being involved with a gay event of this profile – this hadn't been tested and the effect of potential backlash was feared. Traditional sponsors of sporting events such as sport shoe, clothing and equipment companies were the least receptive to their approaches. Levine put this down primarily to ignorance and homophobia within the sports business world.²⁸²

Hence, they marketed the Games as a cultural rather than sporting event to companies who were more likely to be interested in reaching the specific gay and lesbian community.

These Gay Games staff made over one hundred sponsorship presentations. Products such as alcohol, fashionable bottled water, media, pharmaceuticals, clothing brands and telecommunication were targeted. Naya spring water was the first to sign up, followed by the main sponsor Miller Brewing Company, which paid \$150,000 (US) in cash and a further \$150,000 (US) in the form of beer and a major advertising campaign featuring Gay Games athletes. Once this breakthrough in sponsorship had been made, others followed. American Telephone and Telegraph contributed money and a laser light show at Yankee Stadium for the closing ceremony. Continental Airlines donated 100 free air tickets to enable officials and VIPs to attend pre-Games fundraisers. *Out* magazine published the official program. *The Village Voice* published the Cultural Festival program. Mail - order pharmaceutical company

²⁸¹ Barry Van Lenten, 'Fun and Games and Licensing', *DNR* (April 11, 1994), p. 14.

²⁸² Interview with Levine.

American Preferred Plan paid \$50,000 (US) in cash and supplied free merchandise to sell. Alcohol company, Hiram Walker, also paid \$50,000 (US) and supplied a variety of spirits to be used at official functions. Benneton, The Gap, Jay Crew and Levi Straus all donated clothing for staff uniforms. The total value of this cash and kind sponsorship was one million dollars, accounting for one sixth of the total Gay Games IV budget.²⁸³

The New York Gay Games set records here as well as being the first to secure such public and lucrative corporate sponsorship for a gay event. According to Levine this “made people in the mainstream companies realise that they could not ignore this market”.²⁸⁴ It also affirmed to the organisers that this event was a legitimate one – the Gay Games was real because it got sponsors, just like the Olympics!²⁸⁵ Furthermore, it affirmed the gay and lesbian community as integral members of the economy and hence US community. Levine captures this sentiment of legitimation and acceptance felt by gay people in the following quote:

In America I think a group doesn't feel that they've reached social acceptability until there are marketers looking for their dollars, unless they see themselves in advertising, unless they see themselves on TV in a sitcom, that's why people are so wild for gay characters, they want to see themselves in ads, they want to be marketed, they want sponsorship.²⁸⁶

Another manager working in the operations office of Gay Games IV, Steve Mumby, clearly stated what he saw as the strong source of legitimation provided by consumer

²⁸³ By comparison, the most corporate sponsorship secured for Gay Games III was \$5,000 from Molson Brewery. See Max Harrold, 'Corporate Sponsors Join the Games', in Lisa Labrecque (ed.) *Unity*, pp. 98-99.

²⁸⁴ Interview with Levine.

²⁸⁵ See Quarto and Levine's summary quotes on the opening page to the New York Gay Games, p. 236 of thesis.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Levine, p.13.

power and the overall economic impact of the GLBT community, especially through an event of the magnitude of the Gay Games:

I think the biggest chance we stand with the Gay Games Movement is to like reinforce the economic impact that we have as a community and to make these major corporations realise that we are a force to be reckoned with and one thing about America is that it is driven by money....²⁸⁷

Mumby was a corporate lawyer and businessman and during the late 1990s became the Co President of the FGG alongside Co President and corporate lawyer Quarto. The professional and business backgrounds of many of the managers of Gay Games IV also underline this drive for corporate success. Mainstreaming had shifted from gender normativity – which was a dominant theme of the first two Gay Games, to consumer and media normativity at Gay Games IV.

Gaining this significant event sponsorship was quite an achievement considering the timidity of many progressive mainstream companies and what was considered the ignorance and homophobia of many others in their dealings with the Gay Games IV marketing and sponsorship division. According to Hill and Levine, it took over a year of ‘assiduous courting’ of the more open-minded corporations before Millers and Continental Airlines signed up as major sponsors.²⁸⁸ Millers used the Unity ’94 logo of the Games – avoiding the use of the word gay – in its Games advertising.²⁸⁹

Continental Airlines had to deal with a backlash from its pilots, who passed a motion

²⁸⁷ Interview with Steve Mumby, New York, December 1996.

²⁸⁸ Stuart Elliot, ‘Advertising ’94 Gay Games Clears Its First Hurdle in Signing Up National Marketers’. *The New York Times, Business Section*, (December 1, 1993), p. 3. Also stated in the interview with Levine.

²⁸⁹ Interview with Levine. According to Brenda Pitts “Miller created an advertising campaign directly targeted at the lesbian and gay sports market and placed full page ads in major media with specific target messaging along with the line “proud sponsor of Gay Games IV”. This major media Pitts refers to lesbian and gay owned and consumed. Quoted in Brenda Pitts, ‘From Leagues of Their Own to An Industry of Their Own: The Emerging Lesbian Sports Industry’, *Women’s Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn 1997), pp. 129-130.

of strong disapproval in their companies association with such a significant 'homosexual' event.²⁹⁰

Levine also stated that all of the Gay Games sponsors wanted their sponsorship visibility limited to the gay and lesbian community:

They didn't want signage outside venues, they wanted signage inside the venues, they didn't really want a lot of publicity, they didn't want us to send out a press release when they signed up as a sponsor, they wanted the gay population to know and that was it. There was a real fear of backlash.

Levine likened the relationship of the sponsors to this mega gay event as "sort of like a first date, or the first time you sleep with someone and neither person knows quite what to do". Both the sponsors and the Games organisers had to develop trust, figure out what each had to offer the other – they "sort of felt their way". Many companies, and especially the kind that usually sponsor large sports events such as sporting goods/apparel companies were not even the slightest bit interested in any connection with the Gay Games. Considering this context, and the fact that Gay Games IV organisers had to secure all of the funding for this huge and significant event, the marketing and promotion division did exceptionally well.

One of the downsides to this pioneering effort was the fact that the affluent gay and lesbian consumer profile that was sold to these sponsors was not representative of the diversity of the gay and lesbian community. According to Levine, marketers in these sponsoring companies were principally after the single, urban, well-educated and affluent gay man who "spends freely on vacations, travel, clothing, alcohol and

²⁹⁰

Interview with Levine.

entertainment”.²⁹¹ Hence the products and advertising that were most obvious during Gay Games IV principally featured white, middle-class, and urbane, conventionally attractive gay men.²⁹²

Consumer recognition and legitimation was much more obvious for some. The fundraising campaign of Gay Games IV was more successful with the gay men’s and mixed (predominantly men’s) organised events than with the women’s community.²⁹³ According to a US based newsletter of marketing to gay men and lesbians, *Quotient*, the demographic profile of the “typical attendee” at Gay Games IV was “a male in his mid-thirties, with a graduate degree, living with his boyfriend, earning a little less than \$50,000 (US)”.²⁹⁴

A comprehensive marketing survey carried out during Gay Games IV by Mulryan – Nash Advertising for the Netherlands Board of Tourism (NBT), elaborated upon this.²⁹⁵ A representative sample of one thousand one hundred and nine Games participants and spectators from the US were surveyed, of which 27% were female, 77% aged 30-50, 60% earning over \$50,000 and 80% having University qualifications. Whilst the female respondents had slightly higher levels of education they were significantly less likely to be in the top-earning bracket. Questions on the frequency of travel, entertainment and leisure expenditure, Gay Games IV

²⁹¹ Levine also states that these companies were not really interested, nor did they appear to know how to market to the lesbian market.

²⁹² See the advertising in the Official program, the booklet of promotional offers made by businesses that was provided in the registration bag, even the prominent advertising billboards in some of the main streets of Manhattan that featured two youthful, muscular and fit (template men) white gay men.

²⁹³ Interview with Levine

²⁹⁴ *Quotient* (Marketing Newsletter for the Gay Community – Published in New York City: June 1995), p. 3.

²⁹⁵ Mulryan – Nash Advertising for the Netherlands Board of Tourism Study, October 1994. Given to the researcher by the Executive Director of Gay Games V.

sponsorship recognition, and the likely participation in Gay Games V – Amsterdam – were also elicited in this survey. NBT and Gay Games V organisers took up the results – evidence of further Gay Games professionalisation and commercialisation.

We do not know the impact of this limited definition of the desirable gay and lesbian consumer. This selective marketing is still obvious in the mainstream gay and lesbian press. One only has to pick up a gay and lesbian community paper whilst visiting a large city such as San Francisco, New York, London, Amsterdam, Sydney, or Melbourne to have this confirmed. Perhaps lesbians and ethnic and racial minorities are used to this marginalisation as consumers. Research into the use of these ‘affluent’ gay and lesbian consumer statistics within the US has revealed alienation and division.²⁹⁶ It has also been used by the religious right within the US in their battles against gay and lesbian rights.

Prominent academic in the sports management field within North America, Brenda Pitts, identifies and provides an excellent summary of the seven main commercial developments that shaped Gay Games IV and marked out its significant commercialisation.²⁹⁷ These were: the internationalisation of the Gay Games; the 800% increase in participation since Gay Games I; the increase in spectatorship (to over one million people); the sponsorship successes; the officially recognised and significant economic impact (over \$111 million US on conservative estimates) and the sizable expansion in licensing and promotional merchandising generated by Gay Games IV. Over 100 licensed products carrying the Gay Games logo including a

²⁹⁶ See Gluckman and Reed, ‘The Gay Marketing Moment’.

²⁹⁷ Brenda G. Pitts, ‘Let the Gaymes Begin! A Case Study of Sport Tourism, Commercialisation, and the Gay Games V’. Unpublished paper presented at the conference coinciding with Gay Games V – Queer Games? Theories, Politics, Sports, (Amsterdam, July 29, 1998).

variety of sports wear, fashion apparel, memorabilia, pins, gifts, even a chocolate bar named GayBar, were sold at merchandise sites all over the Games, through mail order and wholesale shipments.²⁹⁸ Sports tourism companies were also in operation at these Games, offering travel, accommodation and packaged tours.

The organisers of the Gay Games did well in their breakthrough sponsorship. However, they appeared to celebrate this with little consciousness of these ramifications. For them sponsorship was essential to the staging and legitimization of the Games. This was all that really mattered. In this context, mainstreaming through commercial success was about bringing those most like the mainstream into the commercial heart of American society.

Gay Games IV and Global Consumer Capitalism

As the most prominent international gay and lesbian event that takes up international marketing, media and travel strategies to engage participation, increase the community's profile and legitimization, the Gay Games had become a significant force in the shaping of gay and lesbian sporting and leisure cultures. Furthermore, the kaleidoscope of Gay Games IV participation can be likened to free market equal opportunity, niche marketing and promotion. That is, there is something for everyone, including favourite sports involvement and, gay, lesbian, bisexual, drag and transgender celebrity cultural performances. There are dance parties, a variety of feel good ceremonies and mass get togethers, including gay, lesbian and queer themed film, theatre, art and museum history shows. Participants can buy Gay Games

²⁹⁸ Barry Van Lenten, 'Fun and Games and Licensing', p. 14.

merchandise, gay labelled beer, water, spirits, and travel packages. They can attend political demonstrations, gay friendly cafes and restaurants, and read gay and lesbian newspapers and magazines. Gaining major sponsors for the Games was the icing on the cake – the affirmation that mainstream businesses recognised and desired gays and lesbians as real customers.

This leisure industry is central to the increasing circulation of global consumer capitalism. In this circulation predominant expressions and ways of living as lesbian and gay that are based on Western consumer capitalism are reinforced in cosmopolitan cities and exported into diverse corners of the globe. The New York Gay Games, with its commercial emphasis, success and international profile, established the Gay Games as a mega-event of global, and predominantly Westernising, significance.

Complexities of Inclusion: The Impact of Class and Global Capitalism

In her thought provoking and detailed study into the politics of global postmodern consumer society, Naomi Klein reveals how large and multi-national corporations especially within the US make the most of the marketing and business opportunities created by identity politics of the 1980s and 1990s.²⁹⁹ In brief, her argument starts with a characterisation of left politics at this time. Many activists and academics within Universities and radical groups pushing for social change concentrated on

²⁹⁹ Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (London: Flamingo, 2000), especially chapter five.

issues of representation during the 1980s and 1990s.³⁰⁰ Subversion of loaded language, media stereotypes, making the invisible and excluded visible and respected – these were the key strategies to social justice for minority groups, including gays and lesbians. There was little critique of the political economy underlying these representational systems of inequality; class was off the agenda.³⁰¹

Ironically, according to Klein, fashionable companies took up the very insistence on diversity of racial and sexual identities – this “made great brand content and niche markets”.³⁰² Diversity was supposedly the defining feature of one of the sought after markets – the ‘Generation Xers’. The teenage market was also considered large, lucrative, and impressionable and was also diverse on a global scale.³⁰³ So as not to have to create different marketing strategies all over the world, it was easier to create and aggressively promote the idea of a global teen market – “a kaleidoscope of multi-ethnic faces blending into one another”.³⁰⁴ Companies such as Nike, The Gap, Starbucks, Calvin Klein, Diesel, MTV, Benneton, Levi Straus, Coca Cola, amongst others – all based within the US - pursued diversity marketing.³⁰⁵ They were principally interested in increasing their market share and profits through this strategy. Promoting human rights was very much a secondary concern, as evidenced by the meagre wages paid to much of their workforce toiling in the sweatshops and factories of developing countries.³⁰⁶ This development was occurring around the time of Gay Games IV, and whilst Klein may exaggerate the openness of the market to being up

³⁰⁰ Klein, *No Logo*, pp. 107-117.

³⁰¹ Klein, *No Logo*, pp. 107-109.

³⁰² Klein, *No Logo*, pp. 110-111.

³⁰³ Klein, *No Logo*, p. 111 and pp. 118-121.

³⁰⁴ Klein, *No Logo*, p. 120.

³⁰⁵ Klein, *No Logo*, chapter five.

³⁰⁶ Klein, *No Logo*, especially chapter nine.

front and public in its pursuance of the gay market – the time was certainly ripe for the pink dollar to come into its own. So much so that commentator Daniel Mendelssohn can write of gay identity having “dwindled into basically a set of product choices”.³⁰⁷ The use of market research depicting gays and lesbians as a lucrative market added to this impetus. The commercial and sponsorship successes of Gay Games IV were all part of this diversity marketing development.

Klein’s concern is that this was all happening during a period in late capitalist development when the divide between the well off and most other people was growing at an alarming rate, there was an exploding underclass within developed nations such as the US, and an increasing divide between rich and poor nations of the world. Opportunities for minority groups within the funky, diversity conscious culture industries have also consolidated so that there are fewer opportunities of entry by minority groups.³⁰⁸

Economic and structural power and inequality do matter. As we have seen, it is principally the relatively well off who attend the Gay Games. They can afford the travel, accommodation, registration fee, time off work and away from home living expenses that are required to participate. There are also the leisure time, training and sport equipment costs that are required to prepare for this sporting involvement at the Games. For disadvantaged people living in countries outside of the US affording the time and money to travel to this event can be even more difficult. And there is the socio-economic division between developed and developing nations as well as the

³⁰⁷ Mendelssohn, quoted in Klein, *No Logo*, p. 114.

³⁰⁸ Klein, *No Logo*, pp. 122-124.

degrees of discrimination and persecution that gay, lesbian and transgendered people can suffer throughout the world. An international perspective adds further complexity to these issues of diversity, inclusion, systemic inequality and commercialisation.

Probably the most that the organisers of the Gay Games can do to address these deep issues of the global political economy is to ensure that the corporations they gain sponsorship from are ethical in business practice and issues of diversity. A more extensive scholarship program, hosted housing, even applying a levy to the well off to subsidise the registration expenses of those who can least afford Gay Games involvement, are the kinds of policies that would make for more inclusive participation that is based on the inequalities of economics.

Making the Gay Games too overtly political could be counterproductive. The majority of participants are there for the sport, leisure and pleasure. Organisers of the Gay Games held in Amsterdam in 1998 made a place for the exploration of human rights and social justice in the Cultural Program of these Games. Stonewall 25 provided the platform for political demonstration and the pursuit of universal human rights for gays and lesbians. Stonewall 25 was managed and staged by an entirely different organisation to the Gay Games, and its history is quite separate. However, as the Stonewall celebrations were inextricably connected with Gay Games IV we will turn to them briefly. Their combined effect during those two sweltering weeks in June 1994 in New York City was unique and momentous in the history of gay and lesbian global politics and visibility.

Stonewall 25

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the riot that has been used all around the world to mark the beginning of gay liberation was big, brash, bold, celebratory and explicitly political. It began with thousands of drag queens and bull dykes, radical faeries in full beards and pink fairy dresses, transgender activists and radical queers marching from Washington Square to the Stonewall Inn on the night of Friday 24 June.³⁰⁹ This march was ‘angry and unapologetic’, apparently inflamed by the comments of some Stonewall 25 organisers that “those drag queens and transexuals were ruining it for everyone”.³¹⁰

The march began with a defiant “We’re here, we’re queer, we’re ruining it for everyone!”.³¹¹ Difference politics and the clash between radicalism and more mainstreaming politics was strongly at play here. In the official commemorative guide of Stonewall 25 the Co-Chair of the organising committee pays prominent tribute to drag queens, bull dykes and transgender people, acknowledging their leading role in the riot itself, their work in fundraising and service for the community.³¹² The existence of drag, transgender and differently gendered peoples and cultural traditions worldwide was also recognised.³¹³

³⁰⁹ Kimberly O’Sullivan, ‘Stonewall’, *Campaign*, (August 1994), p. 34.

³¹⁰ O’Sullivan, ‘Stonewall’, p. 34.

³¹¹ O’Sullivan, ‘Stonewall’, p. 34.

³¹² ‘Stonewall 25’, Official Commemorative Guide, June 28 1969 – June 26 1994’, *The List Magazine*, vol. 1. Issue 12 (June 1994).

³¹³ ‘Stonewall 25’, Official Commemorative Guide.

On the following night the largest 'dyke' march ever to take place was staged down Fifth Avenue involving over 30,000 lesbians from all over the world. 'Dykes' in wheelchairs, 'dykes' on motorbikes, 'dykes' dressed as bare breasted Amazons, a large contingent of Asian lesbians, women of diverse racial, ethnic and political backgrounds marched behind a banner emblazed with "Lesbian Avengers – burning for justice".³¹⁴ O'Sullivan recalled some of the cheeky and confronting slogans that were chanted by this mass of lesbians including: "Ten percent is not enough! Recruit, recruit", "We're lesbians, don't touch us, we'll kill you!" and "Fuck lesbian chic".³¹⁵

A more radical group of gays and lesbians, who insisted the main march route on the big anniversary day should begin from the Stonewall site and progress to Central Park down Fifth Avenue, began their march on the morning of Sunday 26 June. This 15,000 – 20,000 strong group focused on the issues of AIDS and sexual liberation. The official march also took place that Sunday morning, involving over 1.1 million people and the unfurling of a mile long, 30-foot wide rainbow flag along First Avenue. All monies collected in this flag were donated to services within the US.

People from seventy-five nations and five continents took part in this march, which poured past the United Nations (UN) Headquarters on its way to Central Park. An official political message calling "upon the peoples of the world to affirm the dignity, legitimacy and human rights" of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people without distinction" and for the UN to make this official international policy by

³¹⁴ O'Sullivan, 'Stonewall', p. 34.

³¹⁵ O'Sullivan, 'Stonewall', p. 34.

extending the International Charter of Human Rights to these sexual minorities, was delivered to UN officials by an official delegation from Stonewall 25.

The alternative and main march joined up at Central Park for a huge political rally and concert. Some of the most famous gay, lesbian, transgender and drag queen activists, writers, actors, singers, comedians, politicians and poets spoke at this rally, along with straight celebrities such as Liza Minnelli and Judith Light.³¹⁶

An extensive conference and meeting program followed the mass marches and rally. Over thirty international and US based meetings involving a variety of GLBT organisations and issues were held during the month of Stonewall. For instance, there was the 16th Annual Gay and Lesbian Health conference, a variety of gay and lesbian based religious organisational as well as professional association meetings, the annual meeting of the Transgender Caucus, an Asian and Pacific Islander Gay and Lesbian conference and an international Bisexual Conference.³¹⁷

These gatherings culminated in the sixteenth Annual International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) meeting. People shared research, strategies, tactics, policy ideas and stories with the primary aim of overcoming oppression, discrimination and violence, as well as furthering their human rights.³¹⁸ The program indicates that many of those attending these meeting were national and regional representatives and leaders of GLBT organisations. Gay Games participants and organisers appear to have

³¹⁶ Lisa Labrecque, *Unity*, pp. 149-153. These included Harvey Fierstein, Urvashi Vaid, Kate Clinton, Marga Gomez, Armistead Maupin, Sir Ian McKellen, Suzanne Westenhoeffer, Ru Paul, Kathy Najimy, and the highest appointed openly gay member of the US government at this time, Roberta Actenberg

³¹⁷ 'Stonewall 25', Official Commemorative Guide.

³¹⁸ 'Stonewall 25', Official Commemorative Guide.

joined the marches, although it is impossible to estimate numbers or their subsequent involvement in the meetings and workshops.³¹⁹ An influx of delegates from around the world had attended Stonewall 25 specifically for these explicitly political activities.

The Global Significance of Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25

The global reach of Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25 was significantly greater than any previous gay and lesbian mega-event, including previous Gay Games. Whilst the predominant participant base of the Games continued to be from the US and the majority of those attending outside of the US were from Western nations such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland, there was involvement by athletes from as far a field as Bulgaria to Zimbabwe. Teams of athletes attended from Japan, South Africa and Indonesia. The media coverage of the Games was also significantly more international.

Stonewall 25 also had an explicit global perspective and engaged GLBT people from seventy-eight nations. The diversity of the GLBT coalition of communities, especially from the US, was represented within the events and meetings of Stonewall 25 and in many aspects of Gay Games IV. All Gay Games and Stonewall 25 participants were engaged in what essentially amounted to the largest and most international gay and lesbian pride event and parade ever staged.

³¹⁹ Many of Gay Games IV organisers that were interviewed participated in the official march along with many of the past Gay Games organisers and FGG Directors that were interviewed. It would be near impossible to ascertain the number of Gay Games participants who went home directly after the Games and who did not stay in New York, or participate in the Stonewall 25 Celebrations. For instance, anyone could take part in the marches themselves – there was no official registration.

US gay and lesbian rights politics and traditions have been the driving force behind these international events. This is evident in the way that the Stonewall riots themselves have come to mark the beginnings of gay liberation within many gay and lesbian communities around the world. It occurs in the public expression of community visibility and assertion during annual gay and lesbian pride parades held throughout the world to celebrate the anniversary of Stonewall. Stonewall 25 brought national representatives of gay and lesbian rights organisations from around the world to a global parade and assertion of universal GLBT rights.

The Gay Games also had its roots firmly within US gay rights and liberation traditions. Modern expressions of homosexuality are being loudly and most visibly asserted here. Identity and difference politics and membership of a public homosexual world involving leisure, cultural expressions, gay owned businesses and media products, community sports, welfare, and political organisations, make up the core of these international events. Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25 were important markers and contributory forces in the promotion of an internationalising gay and lesbian identity and human rights politics.

Politics pervades the Gay Games movement – including Unity '94 – in so many ways, but the primary motivation of participation has been within the realms of leisure and pleasure rather than explicit political action. GLBT people have played the sports and performed in the cultural activities presumably to gain meaning and enjoyment. Some have sought pleasure from watching others 'do their thing'. Many participants have reported enjoying the camaraderie and community spirit of being part of this

very large celebratory event. The Gay Games has been political in the sense that it appears to have enhanced the self-esteem of individuals and communities and made an invisible people more confident in their visibility and their diversity.

There have also been a number of legitimating political impacts coming out of Gay Games IV. These include the official endorsement received from prominent mainstream leaders such as the Mayor of New York and the President of the US. Prominent and positive mainstream media coverage of the Games and the involvement of mainstream sporting bodies in their staging, can also be thought to promote the mainstreaming process.

Reflections and Conclusion

Even though the Gay Games have been more about pleasure than politics, it may be important for Games organisers to appreciate the overriding political dimensions of their philosophical and organisational efforts. The guiding philosophy of the Games – inclusion, participation and doing one's personal best – can be contradicted and eroded through an over-emphasis on elite and celebrity gay and lesbian sports people and performers and on the well off gay white male consumer. This emphasis on celebrity, elite sports performance, big and brash events and commercial success was certainly centre stage during Gay Games IV.

The community basis of the Games – with all of its lively and somewhat inefficient difference politics and conflict – may also be diminished by professionalisation and corporatisation. This internal politics shapes the progressive inclusionary policies and practices of the Gay Games and keeps the Games philosophy alive. However, efficient and professional conduct by organisers in their efforts to stage a successful

Games was important. The magnitude of Gay Games IV and the added difficulties created by homophobia that had to be overcome by organisers all necessitated sound organisational ability and practice.

Gay Games IV marked a watershed in the history of the Gay Games. Organisers maximised the significance and resources of New York as one of the leading commercial, media, fashion and political centres of the world. They also called on the large GLBT population living in New York to provide talent, ideas, labour and support for this mega-event and linked the Games to the major celebrations marking gay and lesbian liberation that originated within this community and city. By and through Gay Games IV, the Gay Games movement had definitely become more inclusive of, and politicised by their diverse community involvement, and more global in its participation and impact. The next Gay Games, held for the first time outside of North America, in Amsterdam in 1998, built on these commercial, political and internationalising developments.

“Friendship through Culture and Sport”: Gay Games V and Cultural Festival³²⁰

The ‘Gay Way’ to Europe - and the world!

Besides being a great sport and cultural event, the Gay Games 1998 are even more so an opportunity for gays and lesbians from all over the world to make new friends and to be visible, in a world that too often does not want to acknowledge gays and lesbians in their societies. During the Gay Games 1998 you can show the world that gays and lesbians are part of our communities in all countries of the world and that you are here to stay.³²¹

³²⁰ Held from 1-8 August, 1998 in Amsterdam.

³²¹ Words of welcome from Mr. Schelto Patijn, Mayor of Amsterdam, appearing in a letter to all participants of Gay Games V. Archived in VU: CSGGPA.

People are so kind. This feeling of friendship, equality and kindness makes me stronger than ever. Now I know it exists on this earth, we can build the same in our own country.³²²

Introduction

The fifth Gay Games, held in probably the most gay tolerant cosmopolitan city of the world – Amsterdam – during August of 1998, was billed as “the largest queer cultural and sports event this century”.³²³ Hailing from 78 countries, there were 16,026 participants in the sport, cultural and social issues program. More than half of these participants were from Europe, marking a significant increase in European involvement. For the first time a dedicated Outreach program funded and facilitated the participation of peoples from developing nations and former communist countries of Eastern Europe. With the aim of promoting human rights, international solidarity and the sharing of life experiences as gay and lesbian peoples across the world, an extensive Social Issues Program was added to the Gay Games format.

Various levels of government within the Netherlands, as well as the European Parliament, endorsed Gay Games V and its international gay and lesbian rights efforts with generous funding of over 2 million US dollars. Symbolic and infrastructure support was also evident, and the Mayor of Amsterdam warmly welcomed all gay and lesbian peoples. He encouraged them to enjoy the tolerance and freedom of his city

³²² Andrei Maimulakhin from Ukraine, representing the gay organisation Pink Triangles, quoted in *The Daily Friendship*, August 8, 1998, p. 5. *The Daily Friendship* was the official Gay Games V newspaper.

³²³ Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam (SGLGA), *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Official Souvenir Program*, (Amsterdam: Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam, 1998) p.10. Collected whilst attending these Gay Games. Archived in VU: CSGGPA.

and take these positive experiences home with them as living lessons of what was possible in the affirmation of their human rights.

The guiding Games philosophy of participation, inclusion and personal best was also taken the next step from previous Gay Games. The dedicated women's policy contributed to a record number of female participants, and a dedicated special needs policy encouraged and enabled the integration of a record number of differently abled people. The Cultural Festival was given equal standing to the Sports Program, and both included mass participatory and recreational elements open to all. Diversity in participation according to gender, gender role, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, ability, HIV status, politics, religion, sport, cultural, social, spectator and commercial interest was certainly brought to the fore at these Gay Games.

Setting the Scene: Integration and Tolerance in Amsterdam and the Netherlands.

On a world scale, people of the Netherlands are reputed to hold some of the most tolerant attitudes towards gays and lesbians, a tolerance that has been slowly increasing since the 1960s.³²⁴ By 1991 a national survey indicated that over 90 percent of Dutch people agreed 'that lesbian and gay men should be allowed as much freedom as possible to run their own lives'.³²⁵ The removal of criminal and discriminatory laws and practices against homosexuals by Federal and local governments within the Netherlands has occurred since the early 1970s. The

³²⁴ Schuyf and Andre Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', pp. 170-171.

³²⁵ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', p. 171.

Netherlands was one of the first countries in the world to remove homosexuality as ground for rejection from the military.³²⁶

There are other examples of this tolerance. From 1973 non-Dutch partners of gay and lesbian Dutch nationals could seek permanent residence in the Netherlands.³²⁷ From 1979 refugees that had been persecuted on the ground of their sexual orientation could seek asylum within the Netherlands.³²⁸ The Netherlands was also one of the first countries in the world to allow same-sex couples to marry and to adopt children (1998).³²⁹ In 1987, a monument commemorating the lives and suffering of gays and lesbians worldwide was built in the centre of Amsterdam. This ‘homomonument’, so unique in this largely homophobic world, has become a central and sacred place for many GLBT peoples from the Netherlands and for international queer travellers.³³⁰

Schuyf and Krouwel point out that “the bud of Dutch tolerance” toward homosexuality actually began to bloom almost ten years before Stonewall in the US. Social workers and leading enlightened clergy provided professional support to homosexuals, and educated the public about tolerance and acceptance during the late 1950s and the 1960s.³³¹ During this period bars and dance spaces opened, and the Dutch Association for the Integration of Homosexuals (COC) was founded, marking significant growth in the gay subculture of Amsterdam.³³²

³²⁶ Schuyf and Krouwel, ‘The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement’, p. 167.

³²⁷ Dutch Association for the Integration of Homosexuals (COC), *Information Brochure, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal* (1012 SE Amsterdam, 1996).

³²⁸ Irene Van Der Linden, ‘Outing in the Polder’, *Gay Rights. Special Edition of Wordt Vervolgd*, (Amsterdam: Amnesty International, July/August 1998), pp. 30-31.

³²⁹ Gert Hekma, ‘Gay Capital’s Swan Song’ *Gay Rights, Special Edition of Wordt Vervolgd* (Amsterdam: Amnesty International, July/August 1998), p. 7.

³³⁰ SGLGA, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Official Souvenir Program*, p. 7.

³³¹ Schuyf and Krouwel, ‘The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement’, p. 163.

³³² Hekma, ‘Gay Capital’s Swan Song’, p. 6.

From the 1970s all levels of Government have worked with gay and lesbian community organisations and especially the COC, providing financial, legislative and social support to further gay and lesbian integration within the wider community.³³³

During the late 1980s and 1990s a full time policy maker for gay and lesbian emancipation worked within the Ministry of Welfare of the National Dutch government.³³⁴ Gay and lesbian studies received government subsidies to research the nature and extent of discrimination and violence experienced by Dutch lesbians and gays. Their respective positions in a number of professions and the education system were also investigated.³³⁵

This proactive and cooperative relationship between government and the peak gay and lesbian organisation, the COC, also characterised the Netherlands response to HIV/AIDS. As a result, the spread of HIV was well contained, anti-gay prejudice was not allowed to fester, and a far more compassionate and effective response to this medical and social emergency was possible.³³⁶

The Dutch have also been leaders in the international human rights movement for sexual minorities, and were founding members of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA).³³⁷ Twenty-five percent of gay and lesbian meeting places and community organisations within the Netherlands are situated in Amsterdam, and this

³³³ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', pp. 163-168.

³³⁴ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', p. 168.

³³⁵ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', p. 168.

³³⁶ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', pp. 169-170. Altman, *Global Sex*, p. 85.

³³⁷ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', p. 162. The first international sexual rights conference was held in 1951 in Amsterdam and the COC was a key player in cementing international cooperation among European sexual reform movements. See Schuyf and Krouwel, pp. 162-163.

multi-cultural and picturesque walking city, famous for its beautiful seventeenth century town-houses, canals, museums and tolerant sex and drug culture, is also known as the 'Gay Way to Europe'.³³⁸ The Netherlands Tourism Authority is probably the only peak national tourism body in the world to actively and openly cultivate the gay and lesbian tourist.³³⁹ Amsterdam itself has a long history of tolerance, being for centuries a place where many oppressed and displaced peoples of the world sought refuge.³⁴⁰

The central argument put forth to the FGG by the successful Amsterdam 1998 bid team - that this centrally located European city was a shining beacon within the world of significant acceptance and integration of gay and lesbian peoples – was readily demonstrated by this history.³⁴¹ A number of the key patterns within this history, including significant government support, an international human rights outlook, the importance of culture, and ease with commercialisation and diversity were central features of the Gay Games held in Amsterdam.

Some within the wider gay and lesbian community of Amsterdam actually questioned the suitability of this city for the Gay Games because gays and lesbians were so integrated and accepted into Dutch society. According to these critics, local emancipation would not be furthered by the Games, and their emphasis on gay and lesbian sport and cultural participation was a counter-productive form of gay

³³⁸ See the Amsterdam Gay and Lesbian Foundation (AGLF) *Bid Proposal for Gay Games V (1998)*. Archived in the SFPL: FGGA, Box 1, FGG folder.

³³⁹ This tourist body did an extensive survey of Gay Games IV participants in preparations for the Amsterdam Gay Games.

³⁴⁰ Hekma, 'Gay Capital's Swan Song', p. 6.

³⁴¹ See the AGLF *Bid proposal for Gay Games V(1998)*. The Amsterdam bid team secured the hosting of Gay Games V over Sydney and Atlanta at the annual meeting of the FGG held in Washington in 1993.

separatism. Editor in Chief of one of the main gay papers of Amsterdam, Henk Krol, was a leading exponent of this critical perspective. He wrote in the special Gay Games edition of Amnesty International's *Worldt Vervolgd* :

The Gay Games are still necessary, but Amsterdam is the last place where they should be held. Moreover, the Gay Games is no longer a tool of emancipation; instead, it has degenerated into one big party. That is not objectionable in itself, but then don't try to promote the Games as a contribution to the fight for emancipation. That contribution will only be made when Dutch gay and lesbian athletes dare to be open about their sexuality in their own sports clubs. Fortunately, in the Netherlands, it is no longer necessary to organise separate games. It is counterproductive and hurts the cause of gay emancipation.³⁴²

For Krol, homosexual integration into mainstream Dutch society and sport had already occurred and the holding of separate games for gays was essentially counterproductive.

Krol suggested that repressive countries such as Zimbabwe, Indonesia or Bulgaria would be more suitable host cities in which the Gay Games could further gay emancipation. However, a public international gay event requiring at minimum no repressive government and police interference would not be possible in countries like these that have outlawed homosexual relations, and where homosexual peoples are actively persecuted.

Whilst Amsterdam appears to be one of the most gay-emancipated cities in the world, it would also be incorrect to portray the Netherlands as a land free of homophobia and heterosexism. Discrimination against gays and lesbians still occurs, manifested in gay bashings, verbal abuse and being treated unfavourably in the general living

³⁴² Henk Krol, 'Lost opportunity', *Gay Rights! Special Edition of Wordt Vervolgd*, (Amsterdam: Amnesty International, July/August 1998), p. 8.

environment.³⁴³ Recent surveys of students attending secondary school in the Netherlands revealed an intolerant and hostile environment exists for many same-sex attracted youth. Homophobia was more prevalent amongst young males than females. Sexuality education within schools is basic, yet homosexuality receives minimum or no attention.³⁴⁴ In a comprehensive survey of mainstream sports organisations within the Netherlands, Gert Hekma found that homophobic discrimination was a common experience for many gay and lesbian athletes, and that very few at the elite level felt safe to 'come out' publicly.³⁴⁵ In a society of relative tolerance towards and integration of gay and lesbian peoples, sports clubs organised specifically by and for same-sex attracted and queer peoples were an increasing trend.³⁴⁶

Dutch tolerance itself is often described as "tolerance from a distance". Homosexuals are tolerated as long as they don't touch one's immediate life too much and they are not that different from the mainstream. Hence, being promiscuous, cross-dressing, gender bending and the like are not tolerated.³⁴⁷ True openness to, and affirmation of sexual diversity beyond the heterosexual is a long way off even in this apparently gay 'tolerant' country.³⁴⁸

³⁴³ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', pp. 171-172.

³⁴⁴ Hekma, 'Gay Capital's Swan Song', p. 6.

³⁴⁵ Gert Hekma, *Als ze Maar Niet Provoceren. Discriminatie van Homoseksuele Mannen en Lesbische Vrouwen in de Georganiseerde Sport* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994). This study was part of a broader research project of the national government and national sports federations examining discrimination issues in sport generally. Past elite athlete and Dutch national handball coach, Jip van Leeuwen, confirmed the existence of this pervasive homophobia and heterosexism at the elite levels of national sport in Holland, and especially within male team sports, during his interview (Amsterdam, December 1996).

³⁴⁶ Agnes Elling, 'Integration Through 'Regular' and 'Queer' Sports: A Critical Reflection. Can the Gay Games 'Change the World'? Unpublished paper presented at the conference 'Queer Games? Theories, politics, sports' (Amsterdam, 29-31 July 1998), p. 5.

³⁴⁷ Schuyf and Krouwel, 'The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement', pp. 171-172.

³⁴⁸ See Brian Pronger, 'Homosexuality and Sport. Who's Winning?' in Jim McKay, Michael Messner, and Don Sabo, *Masculinities, Gender Relations and Sport*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2000) pp. 224-225, for a more lengthy discussion of the limits of this tolerance.

According to Schuyf and Krouwel, lesbians fare worse than gay men in this tolerant Dutch society. This is due to gender inequality, especially within the workforce and the marginalisation of independent women through their labelling as lesbians.

Apparently the Netherlands has “one of the worst records for female emancipation among the industrialised nations”.³⁴⁹ Hekma points out in a brief history of gay and lesbian life in Amsterdam that lesbians have never enjoyed a public community presence.³⁵⁰ Since the 1970s there have only been one or two lesbian bars in Amsterdam, and most lesbian gatherings occur at semi-public places like parties, in living rooms, at female sports gatherings.³⁵¹ The Netherlands may be one of the most tolerant societies enabling ‘respectable’ lesbian and gay people to integrate within the mainstream of the larger cities. However, even in this ‘haven’ social conditions could be improved.

The size, geography and architecture of Amsterdam itself also created a unique atmosphere for Gay Games V. More than 700 years old, Amsterdam became prosperous during the seventeenth century as a centre for international trade and commerce. Many of its inner city buildings date from this period and its canal system on the Amstel river, cobblestone streets, Royal Palace, grand hotels, museums, squares, churches, cafés, restaurants and flower markets all contribute to a picturesque ‘old world’ atmosphere. Amsterdam’s cosmopolitan population of 800,000 is relatively modest by world capital city standards. Its central business, civic and entertainment district is relatively compact. This meant that the main cultural, festive

³⁴⁹ Schuyf and Krouwel, ‘The Dutch Lesbian and Gay Movement’, p. 172. Also see M.G. Schmidt, “Political and Social Aspects of Female and Male Labour Participation: The German-Speaking Family of Nations in Comparative Perspective”. Paper, RSSH/ANU (Canberra, Australia, 1991).

³⁵⁰ Hekma, ‘Gay Capital’s Swan Song’, p. 7.

³⁵¹ Hekma, ‘Gay capital’s swan song’, p. 7. The main bar is Vive La Vie.

and sports sites of the Gay Games (with the exception of the swimming pool) were all centrally located and accessible on foot or by public transport.³⁵² Gay Games flags and banners, rainbow flags and the flags of practically all nations of the world, which had pink replacing their red and/or green, flew all over the centre of the city.³⁵³

Amsterdam's central squares were transformed into public entertainment spaces, with stages for gay and lesbian cultural performances, a movie screen for the outdoor evening showing of gay, lesbian and queer films, as well as massed public seating and welcome banners. A Friendship Village was set up next to the Town Hall to serve as the Gay Games registration and information centre, surrounded by outdoor entertainment and refreshment areas along the bank of the Amstel river.³⁵⁴ Gay Games participants filled the city centre of Amsterdam during the balmy summer evenings to take in the gay atmosphere and enjoy the queer bands, comedians, choirs, films, food, wine and each other. Some of the city's main museums and art galleries featured gay and lesbian themed, as well as gender and sexuality exploring exhibitions.³⁵⁵ Mass weddings involving over one hundred queer couples were staged at the famous and elegant Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky.³⁵⁶

³⁵² The sports facilities were generally within 30 minutes maximum driving distance from the central city area and readily accessible by public transport. The swimming and diving competitions were held at the 50-metre pool of the Sportfondsenbad situated in the city of Amersfoort, which is 50 kilometres from Amsterdam.

³⁵³ Much of this description of Amsterdam atmosphere during the Gay Games is based on the researchers direct experience from participating in these Gay Games.

³⁵⁴ SGLGA, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 6. This official program provided a complete listing and description of all aspects of the Gay Games V program. It was printed as an A4 broadsheet with newspaper quality paper. The *Official Souvenir Program* was more of a glossy production with much less program detail. The two have been cited in this research and should not be confused.

³⁵⁵ The Amsterdam Historical Museum featured a history exhibition of gay and lesbian life in the city from 1880 – 1998. The Rijksmuseum had an exhibition on Olympic gods and homoeroticism. The Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art featured an art exhibition of international young lesbian and gay artists. The National Trade museum displayed the photo exhibition 'Gays and Lesbians at Work'. The Tropenmuseum presented an exhibition of "Black Nudes – New Identity" and the Melkweg Gallery featured "Encounters of the Third Kind – an Exhibition on Androgyny". This list represents only a

Coinciding with the start of the Games, a colourful and at times outrageous Mardi Gras on the canals was set afloat. This was the annual Canal Pride Parade, organised by the Amsterdam Gay Business Association since 1996 and held on the first Saturday in August.³⁵⁷ Opening and Closing ceremonies were held at the main sports stadium – the Arena, home to the beloved Ajax national men’s soccer team. Queer icons such as French fashion designer, Jean Paul Gautier, famous Israeli singer and transgender woman, Diva International, US performers the Weather Girls, well known queer Dutch performers, Matilde Santing and DJ Joost Vanbellen, and a cast of dancing sailors and dykes on bikes, entertained the audience and were televised into Dutch living rooms.³⁵⁸ The Gay Games took over this picture postcard and socially progressive European city in a much more obvious and extensive way than at previous Games.

Gay Games V - Beginnings and Demographics

Key members of the original Amsterdam bid team, John Avis and Marjo Meijer, had been inspired to secure the Games for their city after participating in the Vancouver Gay Games.³⁵⁹ They sold Amsterdam to the majority of the FGG Board of 1993 on the basis of its central European location, progressive social climate, compact

eighth of the exhibitions with GLBTQ themes held in Amsterdam for the Gay Games. *Official Program. Gay Games Amsterdam, 1998* pp. 20-21.

³⁵⁶ Held on Thursday 6 and Friday 7 August, 1998 in the hotels famous Wintergarden and Grand Ballroom. The researcher attended one of these evenings to witness the wedding of Sara Waddell Lewinstein and her partner Sandra. This event was covered by national television.

³⁵⁷ Hekma, ‘Gay Capital’s Swan Song’, p. 7.

³⁵⁸ SGLGA, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Official Souvenir Program*, pp. 36-39.

³⁵⁹ SGLGA, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Official Souvenir Program*, p. 12-14.

visibility and government support.³⁶⁰ Gay Games V engaged 16,026 sports and cultural participants in 30 competitions sports, 6 demonstration sports, hundreds of cultural exhibits/performances and an extensive social issues and conference program.³⁶¹ Participants came from 78 countries, and for the first time a targeted outreach program funded and facilitated 238 people from developing countries and former Eastern European countries.

The majority of athletes and performers came from Europe, followed by the US, Canada and Australia / New Zealand. 54 participants came from South Africa, 10 from Zimbabwe, 31 from Argentina, 20 from Brazil, fourteen from Slovakia and 13 from Russia. Representation of 10 and less came from other developing, current and former communist countries including Albania, Belarus, Bolivia, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Curacao, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirgizee, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Mambia, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Surinam, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad-Tobago, Tsjechinia, Turkey, Uganda, Vanuatu, Venezuela and Zetland.³⁶²

A record number of women participated at these Games making up 41% of the overall total and 50% of European registrants. Women were also well represented within the

³⁶⁰ AGLFBid proposal for Gay Games V (1998). Also informed about this by members of the bid team who were interviewed including Marianne van Staa and Jip van Leeuwen, December 1996, Amsterdam.

³⁶¹ Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games (SGLG), *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam 1998*, (Amsterdam, November 1998) p. 71 (Results, facts and numbers). This is the final report of the organising committee and paid Directors who were responsible for Gay Games V. The report was presented at the annual FGG meeting held in Seattle, Washington in November of 1998. It was passed on to the researcher through the FGG network. It is archived in VU: CSGGPA.

³⁶² SGLG, *Outreach Report*, presented to the Outreach Committee of the FGG at the FGG Annual General Meeting (Seattle, Washington, November 17, 1998), p. 5. This was passed onto the researcher through the FGG network. Archived VU: CSGGPA.

ranks of paid staff (46% of the 54 staff members) on the Board of Management of the Games (37%) and within the pool of volunteers (40% of the 3042 Games volunteers).³⁶³ A record number of people with special needs (250) were also involved with these Gay Games. Policies, action strategies and designated committees worked hard to achieve these diversity outcomes. All 25,000 participants (volunteers, staff, officials, athletes, performers etc) received a participation medal etched with the Gay Games motto: 'Friendship Through Culture and Sport'. Friendship was the official theme of these Gay Games.

Gay Games V had an operating budget of over US \$ 14 million, and according to the economic impact assessment of the city of Amsterdam, brought over 140 million Dutch guilders or \$79 million (US) into the local economy.³⁶⁴ Sport management researchers Pitts and Ayers conducted on site and web site surveying of 223 Gay Games V participants to estimate the approximate "economic scale of Gay Games V on the local economy" and came up with a figure of \$ 350,736,175 (US). Whilst acknowledging a small sample size as a limitation they were confident with this impact estimation.³⁶⁵ However, due to over commitment on contracts and other economic mismanagement practices, especially by the Managing Director of Gay Games V, this event ran at a \$1.92 million (US) shortfall.³⁶⁶ This financial problem was revealed at the very beginning of the Games, and the Municipality of Amsterdam

³⁶³ SGLG, *Report: Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 71.

³⁶⁴ See SGLG, *Report: Gay and Lesbian Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 71 for the city of Amsterdam's economic impact statement. The US currency conversion is based on international currency valued on the 29 December 2003.

³⁶⁵ Brenda Pitts and E. Kevin Ayers, 'An Analysis of Visitor Spending and Economic Scale on Amersredam from the Gay Games V, 1998', *International Journal of Sport Management*, vol. 2 (2001), pp. 134-151.

³⁶⁶ Based on the deficit figures cited within the co-Presidents of the FGG email letter, titled 'Dear Gay Games participants, friends and supporters', dated 28 November 2003. Archived in VU: CSGGPA.

provided automatic and generous guarantees of 5 million guilders to ensure liquidity.

³⁶⁷ Altogether there were 558,350 visits to all Games events. ³⁶⁸ An overall visitor figure of approximately 200,000 people did not reach that of Gay Games IV and Stonewall 25, however, for the size of the city (with only 29,000 hotel beds) this was a multi-sport and cultural event on a grand scale.

Sports Program

Most of the 30 sports on the program of Gay Games V had been held in the previous Games – with the additions of rowing, windsurfing and ballroom dancing. Chess and bridge were also offered as part of the competition menu. The Director of Sport for these Games, Jip Van Leuwen, was a senior policy officer with the city of Amsterdam.³⁶⁹ At the first FGG he attended as part of the bid team seeking to secure the Gay Games for his city, Van Leuwen pulled a large ring of keys from his pocket. He then announced to his audience that these keys would open all the municipal sports facilities in Amsterdam.³⁷⁰ Van Leuwen had been the national men's handball coach of the Netherlands, and he possessed good connections with many of the national and local mainstream sporting bodies. From the Games organisational beginnings these mainstream bodies were enlisted to officiate and manage the sports competitions in conjunction with individual gay and lesbian sports convenors and sports clubs. Hence, the Dutch sports associations 'affiliated to the national Olympic

³⁶⁷ 'The Truth Behind the Rumours', *The Daily Friendship: The Official Gay Games Newspaper*, no. 4 (Wednesday August 5, 1998), p. 1.

³⁶⁸ 'The truth behind the rumours', *The Daily Friendship*, p. 1.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Jip van Leewen, Amsterdam December 1996.

³⁷⁰ Interview with Quarto.

Committee and the Dutch Sports Federation' applied international sports association regulations.³⁷¹

Many of the sports offered beginner/recreational and highly competitive levels, and participants with disabilities or special needs were integrated into the competition wherever this was possible. 14 of the 30 sports offered mixed sex categories in which men and women could form teams and relays together and billiards, chess, bridge and ballroom dancing were organised with no gender divisions. An extensive recreation program involving scenic bike rides, canal, garden, park and walking tours, horse riding, mass aerobics and sight seeing was also organised for Gay Games participants to enjoy.³⁷² Sport for all and competition opportunities for the highly competitive appear to have been well catered for at these Gay Games.

However, there were some problems. The provision of recreational categories within the overall competition did not suit all competitors in the US dominated sport of bowling. Professional players considered it unfair that their averages were based on their performances over a whole year, whilst recreational bowlers could establish their average on the results of three-four qualifying rounds.³⁷³ The bowling conditions within the Netherlands were different from those within the US. Organisational difficulties were also experienced in the cycling, the officiating at the swimming was extraordinarily strict, and controversy over sanctioning and conformity to

³⁷¹ SGLG, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Registration Booklet*, Archived in CSPGGA, VU, p. 29.

³⁷² See Recreation program as outlined in SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, pp. 29-33.

³⁷³ Wanda Vervest, 'The Game's the Thing' *The Daily Friendship. The Official Gay Games Newspaper*, no. 6 (Friday August 7, 1998), p. 3.

heterosexual rules of pairing, dress and dancing roles occurred at the Figure Skating competition.³⁷⁴

In fact, one of the main sport stories coming out of these Gay Games was the unexpected cancellation of the Figure Skating competition a day before it was scheduled to start.³⁷⁵ During the draw for the skating order, the organisers acknowledged that they had not secured sanctioning from the International Skating Union (ISU). Sanctioning was vital as licensed skaters could lose their eligibility status for all other sanctioned and official competitions if they entered a non-sanctioned event. Knowing the conservatism of the ISU, especially in relation to appropriate dress and heterosexual coupling in pairs skating, the New York organisers had obtained a waiver to run their highly successful figure skating competition for the first time at the Gay Games.³⁷⁶

A 'public practice' was held instead, with no judges and no medal winners. Some serious competitors who had put a great deal of time, effort and expense into their Games preparation found this news devastating. Francois Marcoux, coach of the Montreal skaters had this to say: "The outcome is sad, very sad. People have prepared

³⁷⁴ The researcher had first hand experience of swimming officialdom at these Games as a competitor in the swimming competition. She was disqualified in her main event due to a very strict reading of the start rules. A centimetre movement of the chin whilst down on the blocks – with no accompanying body movement – was enough for her to be disqualified. Normally a small movement such as this with no forward movement whatsoever would have resulted in the referee getting the swimmers to ease up, and the start whistle would be blown again. The researcher has had many years experience as a referee at Australian Masters and age group swim competitions. She had never seen the start rule enforced in this way.

³⁷⁵ Jaap Bartelds, 'Tears Over the Ice', *The Daily Friendship: The Official Gay Games Newsletter*, no.2 (Monday August 3, 1998), p. 1.

³⁷⁶ Conversation with Lisa Labrecque during Gay Games V. Labrecque was one of the main organisers of the New York Figure Skating competition.

for four years. All their dreams are gone”.³⁷⁷ The lover of a former Dutch national champion lamented, “Edward’s very upset that there will be no official recognition. He’s been practicing for two years. At the age of 38, this would probably have been the last time he’d compete”.³⁷⁸

Event organisers, staff, skaters, FGG Directors, Mayor Schelto Patijin, Gay Games Mascot Maxine and a packed audience of cheering supporters all rallied behind the skaters during the following three days of “public practice”. Lisa Labrecque was one of the skaters at these Games, and she found the atmosphere ‘incredible’:

Once the skating started, so did the magic. The energy that radiated down from the audience was electrifying: their support and enthusiasm was incredible. They applauded and cheered each skater, every jump and spin, even falls. They laughed and cried with us, sharing our emotions as if they understood what we had been through. They held up scores, threw flowers, and gave one standing ovation after another.³⁷⁹

Labrecque also discussed the camaraderie that developed between the skaters, who practiced one by one, cheering each other on as if they were in the same team instead of competing against one another. They had only themselves to measure their performance against. The figure skating was a highlight of these Gay Games – perhaps capturing the ethos of personal best, community solidarity and the love of same-sex dancing in ways that many other ‘mainstreamed’ Gay Games sports competitions could not.

Ballroom and Latin American dancing captured the spirit of same-sex attraction, love, playfulness and sexiness very well. Moving in rhythm with the music and each other,

³⁷⁷ Bartelds, ‘Tears Over the Ice’, p. 1.

³⁷⁸ Bartelds, ‘Tears Over the Ice’, p. 1.

³⁷⁹ Lisa Labrecque, ‘A Skater’s Perspective’, *Federation Forum*, October 1998, p. 3.

over 200 couples danced the Foxtrot, Quickstep, Waltz, Tango, Rumba, Samba and Jive.³⁸⁰ Six different levels of ability were offered, determined by the dancing couples level of competitive and on the dance floor experience. A beginner's class was offered for people who had only followed dance lessons for about a year. Men and women competed together for medals.³⁸¹ A panel of internationally accredited judges judged dance couples. International rules were adhered to except for the definition of a dance couple (men's couples and women's couples) and the clothing regulations. Mainstream competition clothing – which is highly heterosexualised – was not compulsory.³⁸² A vast and colourful variety of outfits were worn, from the highly formal, the gentlemanly, the femme, the dressed up casual, the comfortable, the sequined and the fancy dress.

Competitors described a relaxed atmosphere, where most were 'dancing for fun and not really for the prizes', although there were a few serious competitors.³⁸³ Spectators and friends at the Opening Ball, held on the Monday evening before the start of competition, joined them. A Gala Closing Ball was held for everyone on the closing evening of the tournament.³⁸⁴ Both Balls were part of the general recreation program offered to all Gay Games goers.

Wheelchair dancing was integrated within the overall competition. A 'combi-class', in which a dancer in a wheelchair forms a couple with a standing partner, was offered at

³⁸⁰ Edwin Reinerie, 'Strictly Ballroom', *The Daily Friendship: The Official Gay Games Newspaper*, no. 4 (Wednesday August 5, 1998), p. 1.

³⁸¹ SGLG, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Registration Booklet*, p. 33.

³⁸² SGLG, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Registration Booklet*, p. 33.

³⁸³ Reinerie, 'Strictly Ballroom', p. 1.

³⁸⁴ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 16.

three different levels – top class, head class and promotion class.³⁸⁵ Two heterosexual women wheelchair dancers who entered the Gay Games competition commented on the difficulties faced by same-sex and/or wheelchair bound female dancers when taking part in mainstream dancing events. Wanda Slokker captures some of these problems in the following quote:

It is very difficult to find a partner at your own level, especially men. We are both straight and would like to dance with men, but it's such a burden to get them to dance. The men who do dance often look down on wheelchair dancing and we really feel humiliated by that. Wheelchair dancing is great fun and we're here to show that to the world.³⁸⁶

Slokker enjoyed the opportunity to dance at her own high level at these Gay Games.

Past able-bodied dance champion, Corrie van Hugten, was one of the prime movers of wheelchair dancing when it began seventeen years ago after she had suffered an accident that paralysed her. Corrie had found that same-sex coupled dancing of the able-bodied and wheelchair varieties, was generally not accepted or sanctioned by mainstream dance organisations throughout the world. Same-sex couples could only enter tournaments staged in Holland and Poland.

This first dancing tournament of the Gay Games appears to have been a most inclusive and participative event. Set within a large dance hall complete with chandeliers, polished floors, mood lighting, fancy decorations and an excellent sound system, the dancing proved to be one of the most popular spectator sports.

Competitors and spectators reportedly revelled in the seriously playful and energetic

³⁸⁵ SGLG, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Registration Booklet*, p. 33.

³⁸⁶ Reinerie, 'Strictly Ballroom', p. 1.

atmosphere, where the sexiness of dancing was expressed and enjoyed in its many forms and couplings.

The original visionary of the Gay Games, Dr. Tom Waddell, felt ambivalent about the inclusion of culture and dance within the Gay Games program. For him, these pursuits tended to confirm gay stereotypes. By Amsterdam, the gendered and heterosexist traditions of two dance sports – Figure Skating and Ballroom / Latin-American – had been joyously danced with, and such stereotypes were embraced as part of the rich and diverse tapestry of gay, lesbian, straight and queer life.

Whilst the dancing sports embraced this playfulness, evidence suggests that other sports were more concerned to project a conventional athletic image. In her research of the Amsterdam Gay Games, Dutch sport sociologist Agnes Ellings attended Track and Field organising committee meetings and witnessed ‘a discussion about the organisation of a ‘queer’ event in a break in the official program’.³⁸⁷ She found that only two younger members of the committee were in favour of making ‘queer culture’ a visible part of the track and field competition. The other committee members, including former elite athletes and officials from the mainstream Track and Field Association, voiced concerns that such an inclusion would ‘spoil the serious program’ and ‘only confirm stereotypes’ which must be avoided. Ellings found similar discussions had taken place on the volleyball organising committee and amongst ‘several members of the Gay Games committee’.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ Ellings, ‘Integration Through ‘Regular and ‘Queer’ Sports, p. 10.
³⁸⁸ Elling, ‘Integration Through ‘Regular’ and ‘Queer’ Sports, p. 10.

The famous celebration of queer culture that occurs during the swimming and diving competition – the Pink Flamingo – was closed to the media and open only to participants during Gay Games IV and V. This deliberate avoidance of any visible ‘queer culture’ in some of the main sports events is in direct contrast to the cultural festival of the Gay Games, where the diversity, ambiguity, fluidity and erotics of gender and sexuality are explored and celebrated, and the traditions and community expressions of queer culture are explicit. Ellings asks the question; ‘Can this apparent contradiction partially be explained by the more conservative and homophobic climate of the sports world compared to the world of arts?’³⁸⁹

The emphasis on elite and celebrity sports performance, which was evident during Gay Games IV, was not as obvious at the Amsterdam Games. Two Dutch international sports champions were used to promote the Amsterdam Games, including Olympic swimmer Ada Kok and volleyball player Ellie Lust.³⁹⁰ High performance sport was catered for and a number of European masters swimming records were broken in the pool. A Dutch national women’s pole vault champion also won her event in the track and field competition. These sports performances received minimal Gay Games attention, as the emphasis was largely on the variety of participative opportunities and performance levels possible at the Games. The official Gay Games program and daily Gay Games newsletter, *The Daily Friendship*, certainly reflected this. Sport was a central component of these Gay Games, but there was also a vast array of other participation and spectator opportunities on offer

³⁸⁹ Elling, ‘Integration Through ‘Regular and ‘Queer’ Sports’, p. 10.

³⁹⁰ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998*, p. 28.

including an extensive Cultural Program that for the first time was given equal status with the sports program.

Cultural Program

The equal status of the Cultural Program was evident in the official motto of Gay Games V: Friendship through Culture and Sports. For the first time in Gay Games history, cultural participants – numbering 1200 – were accorded the same rights and status as sports participants. This entailed highlighting inclusion in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies parade of athletes and cultural performers, registration show bag and Gay Games participation medal, eligibility for budget and hosted accommodation, scholarships to enable participation, and full recognition within official Gay Games information, newsletters and promotional material.³⁹¹ Such equality with the sports program was pursued to achieve a greater reflection of the diversity of the gay and lesbian community, greater diversity in actual participation from Games registrants and spectators, greater visibility of gay and lesbian perspectives and cultures, the facilitation of a ‘broadening dialogue between gay and non-gay communities’ and the stimulation of international contacts.³⁹²

Even though the organisation of the Cultural program was marked by difficulties, including changing leadership and periods of no leadership, it performed remarkably well, with a diverse, vibrant and large program and good attendance figures.³⁹³ There

³⁹¹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998*, p. 13.

³⁹² SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998*, p. 13.

³⁹³ There were three Directors of Culture employed over the four year lead up period to Gay Games V. Periods of Directorship were interspersed with months without this position being filled and it appears that a considerable percentage of the final Cultural Program was organised within the last lead up year to the Games. See SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998*, p. 13.

were eight main components to the festival: an open-air Film Festival offering free admission; a Storytelling Festival involving the sharing of life stories about being gay, lesbian and queer from around the world; a provocative women's festival; an extensive Theatre Festival, gay, lesbian, homoerotic and political Exhibitions of a variety of art forms within the main museums, galleries and exhibit sites of Amsterdam; a Choir Festival; the performances of Marching Bands and an interactive Arts Project.³⁹⁴

Famous and established professionals, amateur performers and people exploring their artistic and creative talents, interests and community involvement were catered for in this diverse program. For instance, fourteen arts projects involved registrants in the making of their own and group artistic creations during the period of the Games. Disciplines and activities as diverse as dance, theatre and soap opera production, the writing of poetry and short stories, photography compositions, cooking workshops, designing and creating a Gay Games Monument, floating objects, Mail Art and Mega-Posters and the presentation of art theory, were open to participants regardless of their experience and ability.³⁹⁵ There was also a strong human rights emphasis within a number of the festival components, especially the unique Storytelling Festival.

Storytelling Festival

The Storytelling Festival involved gay and lesbian people from all over the world sharing their cultural backgrounds, personal stories and human rights circumstances with each other during an intimate morning workshop and a larger public performance

³⁹⁴ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998*, p. 13 and pp. 14-20.

³⁹⁵ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998*, p. 20.

over three evenings. The three evening sessions of this festival, titled Go East: Eastern Europe and Asia, Amor Natural! Latin America and Out in Africa: Africa and Oriental Countries, featured two men and two women from these regions whose story-telling alternated with guest dancers and performing artists. Human rights and ‘coming out’ workshops were held the morning after each public session, with the aim of deepening participants understanding of the “human rights situations of the specific countries featured...and to foster mutual supportive networks amongst individual participants and (potential) activists in a safe situation free of media coverage”.³⁹⁶

This approach had a number of advantages. Moving personal stories could be shared more readily in an intimate and safe environment. Solidarity could be fostered through sympathetic recognition and mutual struggle, and information could be exchanged on issues of strategy and organisation to further gay and lesbian rights. Furthermore, cultural differences and the realities of oppression and struggle in particular countries could be better appreciated in a context that is shaped by those directly effected.

Activists and leaders of gay rights organisations and movements appear to have been the principal storytellers. “Go East” began with the founder of the Philippines gay rights organisation: Can’t Live In The Closet, Natty Manaurt. Manaurt encapsulated his story thus: “I first came out as an agnostic in a strict Catholic family, so the second coming out was easier. Also, I didn’t have to tell my family – they saw it on TV”.³⁹⁷ He featured in the first gay and lesbian rights march of the Philippines.³⁹⁸ On the same

³⁹⁶ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 18.

³⁹⁷ Faye Jenkins, ‘Survival Stories’, *The Daily Friendship*, no. 3 (Tuesday August 4, 1998), p. 5.

³⁹⁸ Jenkins, ‘Survival Stories’, p. 5.

night Taski Tade of the Deaf Gay and Lesbian Association in Tokyo was interviewed in Japanese sign, which was then translated into international sign and verbal English so that the audience could understand him. He was one of numerous participants who reported to *The Daily Friendship* of the moving emotions, feeling of support, solidarity and strength in common struggle as well as gaining valuable insights from the story-telling evenings.³⁹⁹ “Go East” closed with a rendition of the famous gay anthem – ‘I will survive’ sung by Indonesian performer Mary Afdan.⁴⁰⁰

Inspirational poet, lesbian and gay rights spokesperson and School Director, Elizabeth Khaxas from Zimbabwe, told her story during the “Out in Africa” night. In a country lead by a despot who had called homosexuals perverts and animals, Elizabeth had come out in a public speech in the spring of 1997. She spoke of the many borders in which she had lived her life including that of being a female who strove to be educated, a black person that was much more than a ‘black skin’, a woman who dared to love another woman, a lesbian mother on the borders of what it meant to be a proper mother, and “as a school principal...on the borders of an education system that promotes heterosexual conformity and imposes rigid gender norms each and every day of the school year”.⁴⁰¹

This festival was organised and supported by a number of human rights agencies and the Dutch Government including Tamar Luckmann House, Amnesty International and the Dutch Foreign Ministry. It proved to be very successful with all evening sessions selling out, and many participants and audience members recalling their storytelling

³⁹⁹ Jenkins, ‘Survival Stories’, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁰ Jenkins, ‘Survival Stories’, p. 5.

⁴⁰¹ Chris Hebling and Lutz Van Dijk, ‘Soul Sisters in Spite of All’, *The Daily Friendship*, no. 5 (Thursday August 6, 1998), p. 5.

experience as being the highlight of the Gay Games.⁴⁰² A number of the performers at this festival were able to make the necessary diplomatic, financial and organisational arrangements to attend through Gay Games V's innovative Outreach program. The broad selection principles for the Outreach program were as follows:

- A ratio of 50% men and 50% women
- A broad geographical spread (*non Western, developing countries*)
- Qualitative enhancement of the *Sports, Cultural and Social Issues* Program elements through participation by the candidate.
- Involvement by candidate in their local/national gay and lesbian movement
- Willingness of the candidate to transfer the knowledge and experience gained to the people in their country.⁴⁰³

Principles three to five listed above, combined with the public context of the storytelling evenings, all point to the involvement of relatively confident, communally and publicly open gay and lesbian identified performers in this program. Diverse cultural experiences were expressed as were the enduring global gay and lesbian rights themes of survival, coming out to family and community, as well as same sex love and desire. For many of the performers, conditions of oppression and persecution within their countries of origin were more immediate and pronounced. The integration of gay and lesbian people in the Netherlands, and their affirmation, even celebration, through the Amsterdam Gay Games, provided an ideal contrast.

⁴⁰² SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998*, p. 16.

⁴⁰³ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 48. Researchers clarifying words are placed in italics.

The diverse sex-gender systems discussed at the beginning of this chapter were not evident in the reporting of the evening's stories. This could mean that they were not represented in the first place or that *The Daily Friendship* did not cover them. Doing Mati work, living the complex identities of personhood, spirituality and sexuality of the two-spirited non-urbanised Native American, or the gender liminality of the more traditional and indigenous Polynesian, are probably not readily understandable for the majority of participants of this large international and most visible communal GLBT pride event.⁴⁰⁴ The cultural and political differences of being gay and lesbian appear to have been expressed and respected within the programming of this event, although their overall configuration was aligned with Western ways of thinking and living ones sexuality.

The Outreach and Social Issues Programs

Gay Games V were the first Games to develop and implement a comprehensive Outreach Program enabling the participation of gay and lesbian people from developing and/or non-Western lands.⁴⁰⁵ The principal goal of the program was the furthering of human rights – or in the words of the Gay Games Business Plan: “worldwide emancipation and integration”.⁴⁰⁶ Director of Outreach, Leonie van Bommel constantly emphasised the need to combat negative and paternalistic stereotyping often associated with program participants who might be thought of as

⁴⁰⁴ See pp. 281-289 of thesis for a discussion of these variants of same-sex desire and gender identity.

⁴⁰⁵ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 47-51.

⁴⁰⁶ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 47.

“all those pitiful people from poor countries”.⁴⁰⁷ Van Bommel ensured that in the Outreach, promotional publicity and any interviews with Outreach participants, positive imaging was used.

328 people were offered a standard package consisting of: travel (including return airfares) and accommodation costs, daily assistance by designated Gay Games officials, entrance to all the non-final events, entrance to the Opening and Closing ceremonies, public transport pass and a daily allowance.⁴⁰⁸ The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department for Social and Institutional Development assisted with all visa issues. Some of these proved to be complicated and sensitive, and the gay nature of the Games had to be concealed in many instances.⁴⁰⁹ The Housing Department of Gay Games Amsterdam arranged communal accommodation for outreach participants attending in teams and groups (for instance a choir), and individuals were housed with Amsterdam residents offering hosted hospitality.⁴¹⁰

Outreach participants could take part in the Social Issues Program, the Sports Program or the Cultural Program. 88 people entered sports, including women’s basketball teams from Russia and Slovakia, men’s volleyball teams from Argentina and Brazil, a women’s soccer team from South Africa, a mixed soccer team from Zimbabwe, badminton players from Indonesia, same sex dance pairs from Nicaragua and various individuals taking part in swimming, athletics, table tennis and the

⁴⁰⁷ Leonie van Bommel, ‘Recommendations Outreach for Gay Games Sydney 2002’, in *Outreach Committee Report, Annual General Meeting* (Seattle Washington, November 17, 1998), Attachment 2, p. 9. Archived in CSPGGA, VU.

⁴⁰⁸ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 48-50.

⁴⁰⁹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 51.

⁴¹⁰ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 51.

marathon.⁴¹¹ Over 50 Outreach participants took part in the Cultural Program including a mixed choir and a female dance group from South Africa, photographers from Croatia and Slovenia, Community Artist Project entrants from Brazil and the Philippines, and various activists, poets, journalists, educators etc from across the globe.⁴¹²

Like the Storytelling Festival, the Social Issues Program was specially designed to involve Outreach participants in human rights promotion, educational and social outcomes. Amnesty International and Hivos (the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries) provided sessions on Human Rights, Lesbians and Gays and the Law, Lesbian and Gay Activism in Global Perspective, and Lesbian and Gay Refugees.⁴¹³ A trade union conference, “1998 Trade Unions, Homosexuality and Work” examined strategies to “counteract discrimination and prejudice in the workplace”.⁴¹⁴ A variety of workshops designed to improve participants organisational and community development skills were also offered. For instance, Solidariteit Fonds X-Y ran workshops titled: “The Voice of Grassroots Organisations” and “Support for Lesbian/gay emancipation integrated in policy”.

The Departments of Lesbian and Gay Studies of the Universities of Amsterdam, Nijmegen and Utrecht hosted an international academic conference based on the theme ‘Queer Games? Theories, Politics, Sports’.⁴¹⁵ The conference provided a critical forum on the Gay Games and especially explored their political and social

⁴¹¹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 51.

⁴¹² SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 51.

⁴¹³ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 48.

⁴¹⁴ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 21.

⁴¹⁵ The researcher presented at this conference and experienced a supportive, energising and challenging intellectual exchange with other international delegates.

significance. The degree to which the Games were seen to universalise Western notions of gay and lesbian identity was discussed. Some of the delegates from non-Western countries

eschewed the 'Western' model of 'outness', preferring to promote harmony with family traditions and maintain invisibility, whether that invisibility is dictated by social constraints and political persecution, or simply serves those who, while engaging in homosex, do not consider themselves homosexual.⁴¹⁶

A conference report outlining the main issues addressed at the conference, including this critique of universalising Western notions of same-sex desire appeared in *The Daily Friendship*. Conference and Games participants were provided a small window of exposure to the variety of ways that people throughout the world live and identify as homosexual.

Human rights issues appear to have been presented, workshopped and discussed in a variety of contexts and from a variety of perspectives. The Outreach Program, Storytelling Festival and Social Issues Program were the main ways Gay Games V extended its international reach beyond any previous Gay Games. Of course, the majority of participants still came from relatively affluent Western countries and especially from North America, Western Europe and Australia. They were informed about and engaged by the Gay Games through targeted international marketing and promotion, the growing international gay and lesbian sport, culture and commercial networks, gay and lesbian media networks, and the diffusion of information and creation of virtual communities on the Internet. Gay Games V was the first to have an extensive website and the ability to register and communicate on Gay Games issues via the Internet. Specific Outreach efforts of Amsterdam organisers, the more readily

⁴¹⁶ 'Queer Games Conference', *The Daily Friendship* (Saturday August 1, 1998), p. 15.

available on line information and the increased commercialisation of the Gay Games all contributed to their increased global reach.

Commercialisation

Amsterdam became a prosperous city through international trade and commerce during the seventeenth century, and its commercial culture is deeply rooted. Gay Games V matched, if not surpassed, the commercial achievements of previous Gay Games in the areas of sponsorship and funding, creative marketing, event tourism, internationalisation and international media coverage. This judgement is based on evidence of growth in the overall budget and scope of the Games, the substantial amount of government funding secured by Gay Games V, and the development of these aspects of large-scale international event management.

Gay, lesbian and queer consumers were well recognised at this mega event. The ways of understanding one's same-sex desire across the globe were also bound up with the international consumption, marketing, media and travel generated by the Games.

These Games also surpassed all previous ones in its budgetary blow-out of \$1.92 million (US) in over commitments. After the financial crisis became evident at the very start of Gay Games V, exact budgetary figures were concealed and a final financial report of these Games has never been tabled. Because of this lack of hard evidence, the researcher can only make general observations based on what has been

documented in Gay Games V official programs, reports and news reporting, as well as commentary from FGG members during the post Games 'wash-up'.⁴¹⁷

Planning for commercial success was evident as far back as the 1994 Gay Games when the Netherlands Board of Tourism (NBT) conducted extensive market research amongst Games participants and spectators, including their intentions for Gay Games V.⁴¹⁸ New York organisers had secured corporate sponsorship to fund, promote and legitimise Gay Games IV. The more gay tolerant social climate of 1998 Amsterdam and the Netherlands appears to have had a positive impact on relations with potential corporate sponsors. The fact that Gay Games V secured over \$US 2.5 million in local and national government funding, as well as considerable symbolic and operational government support, would have also supported their corporate legitimisation. Major sponsors in cash and kind included; the Royal Dutch Airlines KLM; Avis Rent a Car; energy distribution company ENW Amsterdam; leading telecommunications company in the Netherlands - KPN Telecom; television radio, internet and data services provider across the Netherlands – A2000; suppliers of photocopies, printers and fax machines – Nashuatec; lifestyle clothing wear company Levis Strauss; the largest temporary employment agency in the Netherlands – Ranstad Holding N.V.; and a number of alcohol and beverage companies including Pushkin Red vodka, Bacardi-Martini Netherlands N.V. and Red Bull Netherlands B.V.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ Leading academic in sport management, researcher into the commercial aspects of the Gay Games and observer on the FGG since 1998, Professor Brenda Pitts, is the main source of information on the post Gay Games V budgetary position.

⁴¹⁸ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 53.

⁴¹⁹ SGLG, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998, Official Souvenir Program*, pp. 52-53.

Event tourism was particularly well developed for Gay Games V. This was the first Gay Games to be staged outside of North America, making for a significant number of overseas travellers. Increased commercialisation also occurs over time and with the development of event tourism itself. A number of official travel partners were appointed to sell travel packages (flight, accommodation, sightseeing tours etc) to Games participants and spectators. These companies were based in the Netherlands, the US, Canada and Australia.⁴²⁰ They were promoted in all the major Gay Games information brochures and on the Games web page.

Many individual gay and lesbian targeted travel companies also offered products to Gay Games V participants. For instance, Robin Tyler Tours International, whose specific target market are lesbians within the US, offered The Women's Tour of the Amsterdam Gay Games.⁴²¹ The 1997/8 edition of one of the main US gay and lesbian travel books, *Odysseus* featured Gay Games V with a special cover highlighting the significance of the Amsterdam Games to gays and lesbians throughout the world:

The cover of *Odysseus* '97/8 represents and salutes with pride the 1998 Gay Games in Amsterdam. This special sports and cultural event will take place in Amsterdam, the 'Gay Capital of the World', from August 1-8, '98. More than 10,000 participants and 100,000 spectators from around the world are expected to be in attendance. This will be the last large Gay and Lesbian Event of the Century.⁴²²

Pitts cites many other US based gay and lesbian travel publications that made reference to the Amsterdam Games and observes that the commercial value of the event for this industry was well recognised. A variety of unofficial travel companies

⁴²⁰ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 53-54.

⁴²¹ Brenda Pitts, 'Let the Gaymes Begin! A case study of sport tourism, commercialisation and the Gay Games V', Unpublished paper presented at the conference "Queer Games? Theories, politics, sports" (Amsterdam, July 29-31, 1998).

⁴²² E. Angelo and J.H. Bain, (eds) *Odysseus: The International Gay Travel Planner* (Portland, Oregon: Odysseus Enterprises, 1997), quoted in Pitts 'Let the Gaymes Begin', p. 6.

offering holiday and event tourism packages to gay and lesbian people within England and Australia were also capitalising on the Amsterdam Gay Games.⁴²³

Such enterprise is indicative of commercial growth within the Gay Games themselves as well as a developing niche market that is part of and contributes to the globalisation of gay and lesbian identities and communities. However, commercial difficulties were also evident within this industry sector during the Games including an over reserving of hotel accommodation. Gay Games organisers attribute this to a general overpricing of travel and accommodation packages by travel companies and a telling shortage of accommodation priced at the lower end of the market.⁴²⁴ The myth of the affluent gay and lesbian consumer appears to have been operative here.

A leftist group that called these Games 'the Pay Games' mounted loud public protest over the cost of participating in Gay Games V.⁴²⁵ Above airfare, accommodation and general living costs were ticket prices to the parties, various theatre and music shows, events and festivals and some of the more popular sports events.⁴²⁶ Admission for the Opening and Closing ceremonies were found to be overpriced and undersold.⁴²⁷ However, attendance on a limited budget was possible as hosted housing and limited cheap accommodation within campsites and converted school dormitories was available. Free events such as AmsterDAMnights, parts of the open- air film festival,

⁴²³ Researcher made inquiries herself about travel to Gay Games V through an Australian based company and she sat next to a manager of a gay travel company based within England during her flight from Amsterdam to London at the close of the Gay Games.

⁴²⁴ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 53-54.

⁴²⁵ This occurred especially in the lead up to Gay Games V.

⁴²⁶ SGLG, *Official Program. Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, pp. 29-33.

⁴²⁷ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 65.

entertainment at the Friendship Village, most of the sports and participation centred cultural and social issues programs provided Games attendees with plenty of inexpensive Games involvement.⁴²⁸ Considering that economic impact is one of the main ways the Gay Games is 'sold' to host city governments, business communities and citizens, the conspicuous consumption of gay and lesbian visitors as well as the prosperity of local gay and lesbian communities is integral to the development of this international mega event.

The Creative Director Marketing and Communication, Kees Kuyter, was one of the first to be appointed to the senior management team of Gay Games V. Kuyter had a marketing and design background and from the very beginning was able to shape and control the image of the Games. This creative and professional image was evident in the Gay Games logos, colour schemes, slogans, promotional and information materials, programs, posters, banners, medals, staff and volunteer uniforms, as well as in Gay Games merchandise, sales, entertainment, hospitality and sport event sites, and during the major celebratory opening and closing events and official media coverage.⁴²⁹ Bright yellow and pink were the primary colours of these Games, the word 'friendship' was the primary term used, and the simple but striking logo of intertwined tulip and triangle was evident everywhere. An official Games mascot was also used during press conferences and official proceedings. Pinafore and plaited Dutch girl – drag Queen – Maxim Bezembinder – provided a friendly and humorous face to the Games.

⁴²⁸ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 65.

⁴²⁹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 37-40.

Media and press coverage of Gay Games V was also extensive. According to the official Games report, the global reach of this Gay Games within the international mainstream media and the international gay and lesbian press was greater than that of all previous Gay Games.⁴³⁰ Gay Games V received coverage within the main newspapers of large cities within North American and Europe. Non-Western newspapers also reported on these Games, including Daily Jehan Numa (India), Slobodna Dalmacija (Croatia) and Evenimentul (Rumania). The wire services of international press agencies Associated Press (AP), United International Press (UIP), Reuters and Agency France Press (AFP) were used to generate this international Games coverage.⁴³¹ Numerous international television and radio crews were accredited for Gay Games V, including two from the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and crews from Argentina, Israel, Hungary and Turkey.⁴³²

There appears to have been some initial negative and stereotypical coverage within the US, enough to generate public protest from the large and respected gay and lesbian rights organisation Gay and Lesbian Association for Anti-Discrimination (GLAAD).⁴³³ Many press articles concentrated on the financial woes of the Games and the debacle with the International Skating Union. Once the diverse programs of Gay Games V were well underway, reporting became more positive.⁴³⁴

Games coverage within the international gay and lesbian media, especially within the US and Europe, had been orchestrated as early as the summer before the actual

⁴³⁰ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 32-33.

⁴³¹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 32.

⁴³² SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 33.

⁴³³ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 33.

⁴³⁴ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 33.

Games took place. With the assistance of the Netherlands Travel Bureau, a trip to Amsterdam was organised for the major North-American gay and lesbian press. This generated interest and a series of positive feature articles on Amsterdam and the plans for the Games. A special presentation on Gay Games V was also made at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalist Association held in Chicago in August of 1997, and information/promotion ‘road shows’ toured throughout North America and Europe during the lead up year. Lesbian media were also targeted, resulting in “substantial coverage in Curve (USA), Diva (Great Britain), Lespress (Germany), Lesbia (France) and Lesbians on the Loose (Australia)”.⁴³⁵ Hundreds of gay and lesbian media personnel representing most regions of the world were accredited for Gay Games V. Frequent press conferences organised by the media department of the Games were well attended by these journalists.⁴³⁶ The global reach of Gay Games V within the mainstream and gay and lesbian media further demonstrates its international nature and significance.

According to the Official Gay Games V report, press and media coverage within the Netherlands was also impressive. All national daily and many of the local newspapers gave substantial and mostly positive coverage to the event. A right-wing writer, Gerrie van der List, wrote a provocative column in the Amsterdam mainstream daily, *De Volkskrant*, describing the Gay Games as “the Amsterdam orgy of sperm, homosexuality and child pornography”.⁴³⁷ This sparked an enormous debate within the paper and the other main Amsterdam papers, as well as “hundreds of resignations,

⁴³⁵ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 33.

⁴³⁶ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 33.

⁴³⁷ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 31.

a cancellation of an editor's dinner... and many other columns and articles”
condemning der List's position.⁴³⁸

The Netherlands national television broadcaster NOS presented four programs on the Gay Games called 'World Gay Games'. The Opening Ceremony was also broadcast to an estimated audience of one million viewers. There were also daily reports on television news shows and a variety of interviews with the four Gay Games V program leaders and key performers. Dutch television company, IDTV, was sold the television rights to this event, which did cause some friction, with some broadcasters taking the option of filming outside of designated Games locations because they did not want to pay for TV rights. The national and international television coverage appears to have been more extensive at these Gay Games than previous ones, including New York.

The Dutch gay and lesbian media also covered this event extensively. There was a great deal of debate on the event, with topics such as “Is the Games too commercial or expensive?”, “Is this event stimulating a new apartheid”, “Is the event too prudish (minimising sexual expression)” and “Is the event eating up smaller events like the Canal Parade”?⁴³⁹ Such engaging critique within the local gay and lesbian community demonstrated the Games' political and community involvement. There were also extensive feature articles on the organisation and programs of the Gay Games.

⁴³⁸ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 31.

⁴³⁹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 32. These debates especially occurred in the main gay newspaper, *De Gay Krant*, and its editor-in-chief, Henk Krol, received a lot of media attention for his critical perspective on the Games.

Organisation

The financial and infrastructure support given by local and national levels of Government ensured a well equipped and staffed Games organisation more than two years out from the Games. Eight full time managers and office staff worked within the centrally located headquarters.⁴⁴⁰ These included an Executive Director, who oversaw the core operations of the Games including sports, culture, major sponsorship, finance, marketing and development, relations with the board of management and government bodies (especially the City of Amsterdam), as well as operational areas such as ticketing, registration and housing. There were managers of Sport, Culture, Events and Festivities, Marketing and Communication, Finance, the Office, and a manager of Development and a Director of Operations. Many of the central Gay Games program areas had advisory committees composed of volunteers from the GLBT community who assisted managers with the shaping of policies and procedures. For instance, all sports had organising committees; there were cultural committees, an Outreach committee, a Women's Advisory Committee (WAC) and a Special Needs Committee.

18 months out from the Games there was twenty paid staff working from headquarters, and another office had to be found for the burgeoning workforce. Six months out, a total of 62 paid staff and 1,000 volunteers were working on the Games. By the time of the Games itself, volunteer staffing swelled to over 3,000, most

⁴⁴⁰ The researcher visited the Gay Games V headquarters during a research trip to Amsterdam in December of 1996. These offices were located in one of the main streets of downtown Amsterdam, under a ten- minute walk from the central station. She interviewed five of the main managers including the Executive Director and was given an organisational overview by the office manager – Jeanette Lotte. Information for this section also came from the *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 9-12.

coming from the local gay and lesbian community.⁴⁴¹ An employment company specialising in planning large numbers of temporary employees, Randstad Staffing Services, was used to organise and plan for personnel needs and distribute work to volunteers.

However, most the departments of the Games organisation preferred to do their own planning and arrangement of ‘the right people in the right shifts’ so Randstad’s services were under utilised.⁴⁴² A volunteer’s coordinator managed all volunteers. Special functions were arranged to keep them informed and motivated. The Games information newsletter Inzet was published six times throughout the year to keep all Games personnel and partner organisations up to date on Games developments. Volunteers received meal tickets during shifts, free Games uniforms and tickets to the Opening and Closing ceremonies and a variety of other official functions.⁴⁴³

Management and staffing for these Games appears to have been relatively efficient and effective. The financial crisis was largely blamed on the mismanagement and financial over commitment of the Executive Director. Whilst there was a strong sense of success in the lead up to the New York Games, this was the first Gay Games to perform strongly in its organisation and funding from relatively early on. The generous financial, symbolic and infrastructure support that came from the City of Amsterdam and the national government laid the foundations for this strong

⁴⁴¹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 41-43.

⁴⁴² SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 42.

⁴⁴³ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 42-43.

performance.⁴⁴⁴ This included the provision of staff salaries, centrally located offices and equipment more than two and half years out from the Games.

The City of Amsterdam ensured that the necessary event licenses and permits could be arranged in a timely manner, that public transport and sanitation was adequate, that sports and cultural facilities were available, and that the police and ambulance departments provided essential services.⁴⁴⁵ The City also played a role in promoting the Gay Games to local inhabitants, many who could be disturbed by large, noisy and polluting events in the centre of the city.⁴⁴⁶ Such support was in keeping with the political relationships and practices established between the gay and lesbian community and government within the Netherlands since the 1970s.

This was the kind of support that most mainstream and prestigious mega events received – events like the 2002 World Masters Games in Melbourne. No other Gay Games had received such extensive government funding and support, including the more recent Sydney 2002 Gay Games.⁴⁴⁷ These Games were also in deficit by \$1.5 million (US). Only the Gay Games in San Francisco, which were much smaller in size and budget, have ended in surplus. The reasons for this pattern of Gay Games budget deficits needs to be carefully researched and goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

Maybe organisers, host communities and commercial interests have been too

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with Executive Director, Marc Janssens, Amsterdam December 1996.

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with Janssens and *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, pp. 51-52.

⁴⁴⁶ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 52.

⁴⁴⁷ Sydney 2002 Gay Games received financial support from the South Sydney Council (under \$100,000 AUS). After extensive lobbying over a number of years by Games organisers and influential gay and lesbian community leaders the State Government of NSW paid for the secondment of public servants to work on the Games during the last six month lead up period. Significant corporate sponsorship was not secured for these most recent Gay Games. Information through conversations with Stuart Borrie, Director of Sport, Sydney 2002 Gay Games.

ambitious in their shaping of the phenomenal growth and diversity of the program, the participation and commercialisation of the Gay Games during the 1990s. At the FGG most recent annual meeting, held in Chicago in November of 2003, the Strategic Planning Committee produced a document outlining the main reasons for this financial ‘blowout’ of past Gay Games.⁴⁴⁸ The main reasons cited are over ambitious planning and event complexity, especially in relation to the Cultural Program. The FGG appears most concerned with this issue as it effects the overall credibility and ongoing viability of the Gay Games.

Whilst support from Government was generally a boost to the organisation of Amsterdam 1998, it also presented some challenges. During the 1996 FGG annual meeting, it was revealed that there had been some government interference with the Board of Directors overseeing the Games.⁴⁴⁹ A significant shake-up of people and positions on this Board had taken place due to government concerns of Board direction and competence. Some FGG members were concerned that the gay and lesbian community had essentially diluted their control over the event. This was a cost of substantial government funding. The City and national governments were also accountable to their constituents – the generally tolerant but potentially critical broader community.

⁴⁴⁸ FGG Strategic Planning Committee, ‘Image of the Gay Games’, document formulated and tabled at the FGG Annual Board meeting held in Chicago, November 2003. Available from the FGG Website (Accessed December 6, 2003) <http://www.gaygames.com/en> or <http://www.gaygames.org>.

⁴⁴⁹ The Board of Directors of Gay Games Amsterdam 1998 consisted of former politicians, community and business leaders, senior public servants from the City of Amsterdam and gay and lesbian community representatives. This body advised the Executive Director and paid staff managing the Games as well as making major policy decisions.

Considering the diverse and affirming GLBT program of these Gay Games, which often pushed the boundaries of conventional gender and sexuality, government involvement does not appear to have compromised the diverse community engagement in these Games. The numerous advisory committees made up of GLBT community members and an engaged and critical local gay and lesbian media were also important in the overall community ownership of the Amsterdam Gay Games.

Politics and Policies of Diversity and Difference

In keeping with the Gay Games guiding principles of inclusion and participation, Amsterdam 1998 developed policies and practices that promoted and enabled diverse involvement from across and within the international Gay Games community. As the international perspective has already been examined, this section will look more closely at the ways the differences within the GLBT community were catered for.

This involved an integrated women's policy and program, an extensive special needs policy for people with disabilities, including those living with HIV and AIDS, and a transgender policy. Gender normativity, which had featured so strongly in the public image of the first two Gay Games, had little overall resonance. For instance, Maxine, the official Games mascot, was a drag queen. The person honoured with the task of officially opening these Games, Diva International, was a famous international singer and transgender woman. Diva graced the cover of the *Official Souvenir Program* of Gay Games V. Difference politics appears to have been more forceful and effective in the organisation and programming of these Gay Games, and this was especially apparent with the women's policy.

Gender Equality at the Gay Games

One of the principal goals of the original Gay Games had been to bring the different and often separate men and women's communities together through a festival of sport. There was a commitment to co-gender representation, the chairing of important committees and specific outreach to increase the overall participation of women. Until Amsterdam, this participation had not been carefully monitored and women have constituted 30 – 40% of overall Gay Games registrations. Considering that gay is usually associated with men, the Games title has also better represented gay male involvement and interests.⁴⁵⁰ Amsterdam 1998 was the first Gay Games to prioritise the equal involvement of women within its bid campaign, setting a target for at least 40% female participation in sport.⁴⁵¹

Within its first organisational year WAC was established. This feminist informed and activist oriented committee extended the 40 % target to all aspects of the Games, including sport and cultural participants, staff, volunteers and visitors.⁴⁵² It had input into all aspects of the women's policy, although the committee appears to have been frustrated in its efforts to make gender issues a major priority within many of the Gay Games Departments.⁴⁵³ A Women's Promotion Officer was employed to further these goals.

⁴⁵⁰ Conversations with Mart and Mitchell revealed that there was some initial debate amongst the first Gay Games organisers over the use of the generic 'gay' to also encompass lesbians and that many of the women within SFFA were accepting of the Gay Games as an appropriate title. The researcher has not come across any further deliberation on this issue – which is not to say this has not occurred.

⁴⁵¹ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 45.

⁴⁵² *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 45.

⁴⁵³ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 45.

Amsterdam achieved greater overall involvement of women in quantitative and qualitative terms than any other Gay Games. Women made up 42% of all participants, workers and visitors, and the systematic and integrated approach that was used ensured greater representation and programming coverage of women's cultures and interests.⁴⁵⁴ Such success also demonstrated that within the context of a largely gay male dominated public community there needed to be a committed, concerted and political effort to achieve this kind of gender inclusion.

This first systematic and integrated approach to gender equality within the Gay Games involved four policy areas. The first was the policy of gender parity in leadership positions, committee representation and staff and volunteer recruitment and selection. Women within the organisation and on the WAC used their networks, the lesbian press, venues and social gatherings to recruit suitable candidates for staff vacancies. Such proactive recruitment was considered essential to address the gay male dominated and visible public community that was seen as the focal point for the Gay Games by both the local mainstream and gay and lesbian communities. Gay men within this more visible and public community and within the Games organisation itself, were not connected with, and had little interest in lesbian networks.

Affirmative action principles were used in the selection process. 46% of paid staff organising Gay Games V and just under half of senior managers were women.⁴⁵⁵

Women constituted 37% of all volunteers. According to the final Gay Games report

⁴⁵⁴ Isabel Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event? The Efforts of the Feminine Politics*. Final tabled report written by the Women's Promotion Coordinator, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998. Rotterdam, June 1999. Translated by Paulien Ingen-Housz. The researcher was provided a copy of this report by Sydney 2002 Gay Games. She arranged for its translation from Dutch to English by one of her international exchange students - Paulien Ingen-Housz. The English version was subsequently used by Sydney 2002 organisers and the Sydney 2002 women's Advisory Committee. Archived CSPGGA, VU.

⁴⁵⁵ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 45. Also see list of management in the *Official Souvenir Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 6.

efforts were always made to have co-gender representation in all public presentation, interviews and promotional road shows, but this was not always achieved. All organisational departments were required to report on how they would create gender-parity but this issue “easily got lost in the flow of things”.⁴⁵⁶

The second area of the Women’s Policy involved an extensive and targeted promotions campaign. The Women’s Promotions Coordinator, Isabel van Leeuwen, researched the perceptions women had of the Gay Games, and some preliminary explanations for their lower involvement than gay men are as follows (translated from Dutch to English):

Women in general apply later (*for registration in the Gay Games*) than men.

Women have less money to spend (*generally speaking*) than men.

Women have different routines than men.

Women had the idea that the Gay Games were a male dominated event.

Women spent less time going out and not spending time at gay or lesbian events, so they are harder to reach.

Women have more to do with children than men.

Women think less of themselves (*self-esteem, confidence*) than men do.

Women are less fanatic (*competitive/focused?*) than men.⁴⁵⁷

These reasons provided an initial starting point for women’s policy and program development. They also point to some important differences between the social, economic and political contexts of gay men and lesbians that have parallels with heterosexual men and women.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 45.

⁴⁵⁷ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event? The Efforts of the Feminine Politics*. Isabel does not specify how she researched these issues, although she appears to have looked at past Gay Games registration patterns and conducted some informal interviews with lesbians living in Amsterdam who were aware of the Gay Games. The word of clarification in brackets and italics are the researchers.

⁴⁵⁸ See A. Stein, ‘Sisters and Queers: The Centering of Lesbian Feminism’, in P. Nardi and B. Schneider (eds) *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 561.

Van Leeuwen shaped specific marketing and promotions strategies to better reach women locally and internationally. Due to the lack of visibility of many lesbian communities and networks, she built up a large network of contacts through careful and proactive investigation, personal grapevines and inquiries directed to the Gay Games office. This network ‘snowballed’. Key contact persons were sourced in different cities and countries to distribute information about the Gay Games.⁴⁵⁹ Specific promotional materials attractive to women were also developed, including a women’s page on the Games website, a women’s section in the Amsterdam 98 information newsletter published before the Games titled *Friendship*, and a women’s guide of Gay Games V and Amsterdam.⁴⁶⁰

All main promotion material and information contained images of women and men, and the registration booklet featured two women on its front cover. The Women’s Promotion Coordinator also built up a staff of twenty volunteers to attend all of the main lesbian events within the Netherlands and closer European countries to promote the Games. Promotional ‘road shows’ staged throughout Europe and the United States also had co-gender representation.⁴⁶¹ According to the extensive follow up research carried out by van Leeuwen, these specific and targeted promotional strategies were also effective in reaching women and ensuring that they felt an integral part of the Gay Games.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* pp. 13-16.

⁴⁶⁰ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 15.

⁴⁶¹ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 16.

⁴⁶² Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* pp. 40-41. This research consisted of over 40 in-depth interviews with Gay Games participants and staff as well as email surveys and data analysis of the Games. Random small samples of participants from all of the main geographic regions of the Games were surveyed.

A number of specific measures designed to increase the registration of women in the sports program and to take account of women's generally lower income levels and greater family commitments were also implemented as part of the women's policy. It was found that women tended to register for the Games sports places later than men so 40% of available places for each sport were reserved for women up until January 1998. After this date any places left over were opened up to all. Some sports filled up quickly and there were waiting lists created for men wishing to register.⁴⁶³ All men wishing to participate did so, although a number had to wait until women's registration quotas had been met. Through follow up research involving participant interviews and data analysis, the registration quota system was deemed a success in encouraging women to register.⁴⁶⁴

This policy did create some controversy, and one of the main gay papers in Amsterdam ran a story that men could not register in the Gay Games.⁴⁶⁵ The organisers had to correct this error promptly.⁴⁶⁶ The researcher recalls resentment amongst gay men within Team Melbourne and Team Sydney, who considered that the policy discriminated against men. To increase registration further, women were also eligible to seek an exemption from paying the late registration fee imposed on all others registering after January 1 1998. In the final Gay Games V report this policy was deemed unfair, divisive and ineffective.⁴⁶⁷ Budget accommodation in the form of hosted housing, accommodation in tents and caravan parks and within schools was organised for people on low incomes, and women were given priority. Affordable and

⁴⁶³ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 11.

⁴⁶⁴ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* pp. 22-23.

⁴⁶⁵ The main gay newspaper within the Netherlands, *De Gay Krant*.

⁴⁶⁶ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 23.

⁴⁶⁷ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 23.

twenty-four hour accessible professional childcare was also made available to people with infants and children.⁴⁶⁸

A fourth strategy to achieve gender equity within Gay Games V was the creation of a specific women's program as well as a balance of women's and men's interests and participation opportunities within the sport, cultural, social issues and events and festivities programs that made up the Games. Some of this integration has already been discussed in the relevant sections of this chapter. The International Women's Festival was initially conceived by the WAC of Gay Games V to provide culturally affirming, provocative and diverse art and entertainment, especially to the lesbian communities of the Games.⁴⁶⁹ There were mixed gender evening performances and events and women- only evenings allowing for more freedom of connection and expression amongst women. This certainly deviated from the non-separatist and basically liberal feminist-informed policies of the original Gay Games.⁴⁷⁰

A professional multi-media organisation with twenty years of experience setting up women's festivals - Melkweg - coordinated this Festival. An international theatre, dance and music program explored the themes of 'role models, dress codes, sexuality and gender crossing'.⁴⁷¹ For instance, the show "Take A Walk On The Wilde Side", presented by the "SM Dykes of the World", featured an international cast and

⁴⁶⁸ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 12.

⁴⁶⁹ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 13.

⁴⁷⁰ All Gay Games I and II events had to be co-gender. Sara Lewinstein and Rosemary Mitchell discussed this issue in their interviews. A lesbian businesswomen's association of San Francisco wanted to hold a women only event and Sara enforced Games policy by convincing them of the need to open it to men. A liberal feminist perspective was operative within the Gay Games organisation and amongst the key women leaders of these early Games.

⁴⁷¹ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 18.

explored “the sensual, the raunchy, the kinky and the hilarious” phenomena of sex.⁴⁷² There was also the Exploratorium – a series of “sensual and erotic chambers for all curious and courageous women”.⁴⁷³ Through humorous theatre, mime and circus performance, Kris Niklison played “an androgynous person living a utopian lifestyle, free from social rules and prejudices”.⁴⁷⁴ The Women’s Festival proved to be popular and at times controversial, and according to the final Gay Games report – “remarkable” in bringing the various groups within the Dutch women’s community together to mix and get to know each other.⁴⁷⁵ Feminist, queer, S/M, dyke, femme/butch, lipstick, older, younger lesbians from various countries all appear to have been represented in the Festival.

Whilst most of the other Games programs received favourable feedback on the equal inclusion of women, there was considerable criticism of the Opening and Closing ceremonies. Follow up research indicated that many women considered these male dominated.⁴⁷⁶ Evidence given was the greater number of men performing, the nature of many of the performances, and the attention to principally gay male cultural references. Fashion, drag and feminine transgender beauty were included in this critique.⁴⁷⁷ Only one big name Dutch lesbian singer was secured to perform at the ceremonies – Matilde Santing. The most telling concern of sporting lesbians was the apparent male bias in the edited highlights video that was shown during the closing ceremony. This video featured very few women and even fewer in sports action.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷² SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 18.

⁴⁷³ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 18.

⁴⁷⁴ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 18.

⁴⁷⁵ SGLG, *Report of the Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam, 1998*, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁶ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 43.

⁴⁷⁷ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 43.

⁴⁷⁸ Van Leeuwen, *Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Equal Gay and Lesbian Event?* p. 43.

The Games ceremonies play an important symbolic function in marking out the cultural meaning and significance of the Gay Games especially for participants. They were televised and convey this cultural and symbolic meaning into the public and mainstream. It would seem vital that sensitivities to the inclusion of women, which have been greatly improved within many aspects of Gay Games V, should also carry over to these important ceremonies.

Women's participation within the sports program overall was also greater than any other Gay Games. A number of researchers within the US, Europe and Canada have demonstrated that lesbian participants in general, especially value the social affiliation and enjoyment of their sport involvement.⁴⁷⁹ After surveying 132 women who had participated in sport at Gay Games IV, Krane and Romont found social and community affiliations such as the feelings of camaraderie amongst participants, the friendly attitude to competition and being out and comfortable amongst many other lesbians were these women's most positive experiences of the Gay Games.⁴⁸⁰ Rowe and Symons surveyed 114 European women about their sport participation in the 2000 EuroGames and Amsterdam 1998.⁴⁸¹ Over half of the respondents were involved in team sports at these Games, 66.3% played regular social sport, and the main reasons motivating them in their participation was fun and enjoyment, followed by friendship, socialising and fitness. The Games ethos of participation and personal

⁴⁷⁹ See Susan Cahn *Coming on strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York: Free Press, 1994) Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*; Helen Lenskyj, 'Sexuality and Femininity in Sport Contexts: Issues and Alternatives', pp. 19-33.

⁴⁸⁰ V. Krane and L. Romont, Female Athletes' Motives and Experiences During the Gay Games, *Journal of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Identity*, vol. 2. no. 2 (1997).

⁴⁸¹ Kate Rowe and Caroline Symons, *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun. Report on Lesbian Participation at EuroGames 2000, and Implications For the Sydney 2002 Gay Games*. Unpublished paper based on research funded by New South Wales (Australia) Department of Sport and Recreation in lead up to the Sydney 2002 Gay Games.

best appears to fit well with these primary motivations of sports involvement.

Amsterdam strongly emphasised this ethos in the sport program. The main strategies of the women's policy such as specific promotion, equal programming, equal staffing and representation and the specific measures would also have contributed to this increased participation by women in the Amsterdam sport program.

Sex and the Gay Games

Difference politics within the women's communities involved in the Games, as well as between women and men, was made explicit in the varying ideologies and expression of sexuality and its mixing with sport. This became most noticeable to the researcher during the Queer Games conference when the keynote speaker and main organiser Gert Hekma lamented what he saw as the clean sports and friendship image of the Games and the relegation of sex to "the dunces corner" by Games organisers.⁴⁸² He adopted a neo-Marcusean perspective in his critique of the 'clean cut' Gay Games, which is simplified and summarised in the following ways. For Hekma, even in the Gay Games – where a vibrant pro-sex community should feel at home and fully expressive – sex and sport were too dangerous to mix. Sex was mutually pleasurable, expressive, potentially liberating and most importantly, defining of gay culture. Public promiscuous male homosexuality had a rich history in the west that was theorised by radical gay liberationists as potentially disruptive to private, monogamous, naturalised and controlling heterosexual sex and the competitive and hierarchical relations that predominated between men.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸² Said during his keynote address on the first day of the conference. Hekma also makes the same comment in "Gay Capital's Swan Song" *Gay Rights*, p. 7.

⁴⁸³ Pronger, 'Homosexuality and Sport', p. 240.

Brian Pronger was also presenting at this conference and shared Hekma's concerns about the sexless and normalising Games. In a subsequent paper he sums up his central argument thus:

Far better for men to make love with each other in public than to compete and distance themselves in public spectacles such as sport and warfare. It is a poignant sign of a culture that for most people it is more acceptable to see men in parks, on television, or in movies aggressively taking things from each other, be it points in a game or life itself (in the case of violent movies), than to see them lovingly probe each others' bodies with hands, tongues, mouths and penises. Radical gay liberationists were and still are aware of this and have promoted public homosexuality as a disruptive, transgressive alternative to more violent and unloving expressions of intermale desire.⁴⁸⁴

Both Pronger and Hekma believed that the homoerotic aspects of sport should be fully expressed rather than repressed, and that it was better for men to pleasure each others bodies in sex than inflict acts of violence and domination, as was the practice of many macho sports.

During Hekma's critique of the sexless Games an academic and lesbian feminist college turned to me and said – "this is principally about men". Whilst she was also concerned with the violence of the most valorised traditionally masculine sports she also questioned the apparent conflation of making love with public and anonymous sex. There are a number of ideological perspectives and outlooks taken by lesbians on the issue of sex, ranging from the monogamous and private to sex radicals taking up similar sexual relations and practices as their gay male counterparts.⁴⁸⁵ However, the "rich history of illicit (intermale) sexuality in parks, washrooms, locker rooms, dormitories, barracks, jails, alleyways, bathhouses, gyms, YMCAs, summer camps,

⁴⁸⁴ Pronger, 'Homosexuality and Sport', p. 240.

⁴⁸⁵ Faderman dedicates a whole chapter of her history of lesbian life in twentieth-century America, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, to the lesbian sex wars of the 1980s.

churches and choirs” that Pronger and Hekma celebrate has few parallels in Western lesbian history and culture.⁴⁸⁶ The gender order shapes female desire and homosocial relations differently from men’s, on and off the sports field.

Coincidentally, the most visible public displays of the body and sexuality over the Games period occurred in the Canal Parade and at the Opening Ceremony with gay men featured in these displays. For instance, dozens of floats danced upon by near naked youthful gay men were the primary sites of the Parade, and during the official Opening 110 sailor men stripped naked to the song ‘It’s raining men’.⁴⁸⁷ The ‘near naked sports’ of bodybuilding and swimming, and the sexy dance sports were some of the most popularly watched by spectators. Contrary to Hekma’s lament, the researcher also observed free and public sexual play amongst men in the spa pool that was set aside for warming down and relaxing after competing in the swimming. Women competitors stopped using the spa – and one jokingly commented on the amount of sperm in the water saying that it was best to stay out to prevent pregnancy! Conflicting uses of public spaces, facilities, beliefs and ideologies concerning sexual relations and expression, the public and the private, the boundaries of the body, sex and sport are all at play here.

Sex was part of the women’s program, although it was officially explored within the confines of the cultural program and in secluded women only spaces. During the Opening Ceremony lesbian desire was centre stage when singer Matilde Santing was driven into the Arena by leather clad and bare breasted ‘dykes’ on large motorbikes

⁴⁸⁶ Pronger, ‘Homosexuality and Sport’, pp. 239-240.

⁴⁸⁷ Researcher was in the audience.

who kissed and caressed each other during a romantic song. Muscular and eroticised lesbian and gay men's bodies featured in the advertising of the official programs of the Gay Games. The erotic appeal of the heroic and muscular butch lesbian was freely celebrated in many sports and especially the powerlifting and bodybuilding.⁴⁸⁸ As Hargreaves points out 'lesbian and gay bodies, through their presence, physique and homoerotic appeal are at the hub of the Gay Games culture'.⁴⁸⁹ Contrary to Hekma's claim that these Gay Games were coy, sex, sport and culture did mix.

Hargreaves interviewed some sporting dykes at these Gay Games who wanted to distance themselves "from the narcissistic and vulgar" emphasis on public displays of sex. She recorded one lesbian athlete who aptly summed up this position:

Sex and sleaze is not how lesbians want to be perceived in the gay world. Many lesbians dissociate themselves from the idea. They are *normal* people who care about their towns, are interested in the environment, and are involved in community politics and so on... And many lesbians who come here are passionate about sport and that's the most important reason for coming – to be able to take part in sport without the usual obstacles and homophobic attitudes... This portrayal (sex and sleaze) might have been down to the fact that the symbol of Amsterdam is sex – very much aimed at the male market. Amsterdam put out the wrong message (although the organisation of the Games and how it was run was fantastic)... I found the official programme offensive with its images of naked bodies and sex. This is a total myth of what gay people are about.⁴⁹⁰

Playing sport in an affirming environment was the most important aspect of the Gay Games for this lesbian, and her perspective on sex at the Games corresponds strongly with the Gay Games founders. The Games were an important vehicle to dispel myths

⁴⁸⁸ 'Dykes on Bikes' and athletic and muscular lesbian women have been invested with significant erotic and heroic appeal within many lesbian communities worldwide. Sally Munt discusses this further in *Heroic Desire. Lesbian Identity and Cultural Space* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

⁴⁸⁹ Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, p. 166.

⁴⁹⁰ Hargreaves., *Heroines of Sport*, pp. 169-170.

and stereotypes about lesbian and gay people, especially those concerning 'sex, sleaze' and deviance.

The perceived differences between men and women who believe that sex, sport and the Gay Games should be separate, and those who embrace sex as a vital and defining feature of gay and lesbian culture within the Gay Games, are all made explicit in these incidents and conflicts. Gender and sexualities are central sites for inequalities and contesting perspectives that are embedded in cultural, ideological and structural differences. They also underline the lesser participation, representation and inclusion of women within the Gay Games.

I have been unable to look more closely at this gender and sexual politics from the perspective of those attending the Games from developing countries. Black lesbians from developing countries are marginalised and oppressed in numerous ways and greater equality in sport may not be high on their agenda of basic survival and human rights goals. This can make getting to an event like the Gay Games particularly difficult.

Gay Games V included people with special needs such as disabilities and HIV within all aspects of the Games programs, events and services in a much more planned and integrated way than previous Gay Games. This area of diversity inclusion is more fully discussed in chapter three of the thesis. The transgender policy adopted for the Amsterdam Games was more inclusive than that of New York's. This issue is covered extensively in chapter six of the thesis. Transgender people still experienced difficulties with this policy and were still treated as a peripheral community within the

larger and dominant identity politics of gay men and lesbians organising and participating in the Gay Games.

Considering the diversity of Amsterdam's programs (culture, social issues, sports, parties and events) the diversity enabled by its policies of inclusion (outreach, women's, special needs, transgender) and the diversity within the many communities attending these Games (sex, sexuality, gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, country of residence, ability/disability, political and religious beliefs etc) differences are played out in many ways. There is no one Gay Games. At any one of the five Gay Games that have been staged, there are a multiplicity of Gay Games lived by the various participating individuals, groups and communities. Most importantly, pluralistic and targeted programming sensitive to the perspectives and interests of particular community groupings, especially main differences such as gender and multiculturalism, has ensured a more global Gay Games. Amsterdam 1998 was the most diversity inclusive of the five Gay Games that have been examined in depth in this thesis.

Conclusion

Gay Games V was a very different Games from the first, held in San Francisco sixteen years previously. Over this period the Games had grown tenfold in registered participants and more than doubled the number of sports offered. The Cultural Program had been equalised with the sports program and by Amsterdam there were many more special events and social issues programs. Amsterdam essentially built on the programming, commercialisation and internationalising developments of the New York Gay Games. The culture of tolerance and homosexual integration into

Dutch society as well as the strong government support that was behind Gay Games V, provided the bedrock for these Games to grow and diversify and to forcefully promote GLBT rights as an important international human rights issue. Through these developments the Gay Games had become the largest international GLBT event, which circulated, promoted and reinforced modern Western notions of GLBT identity and community. At the same time these Games also developed spaces for the diverse expressions of same-sex desire and gendering within GLBT communities across the world.

Amsterdam continued with this liberal pluralist tradition in the organisation and ethos of its sports program. Participant-consumers could choose from an array of sports and levels of competition experience and ability. Many sports were officially sanctioned by mainstream sports bodies and hence were organised according to mainstream sports rules. Within this context, making the sports program inclusive and participation based was a reformist rather than a transformative enterprise. Sports were not reorganised or reinvented to engage more fully all of the GLBTQ communities involved in the Gay Games. This will be further exemplified in the next chapter on transgender inclusion at the Gay Games. A reformist model of sport fits better with a mass participatory international event as universal sporting traditions and practices are known and embraced by most sports participants. However, by Amsterdam concerns for proving gender normality through playing sport were relatively insignificant. The Gay Games had become much more a celebration of the diverse communities they encompassed and the cultural, political, economic and sporting consumption and expressions of these communities.

Chapter 6 Transexed Conundrums

Straight culture reads much of the public expression of gay identity as gender transgression. To them, we're all part of the same garbage heap of sex-and-gender trash. It is practical points like this that can most easily draw queer and transactivists together.¹

Gay Games philosophy decentres identity politics principally by recognizing multiple lesbian and gay oppressions and identities. This occurs firstly with regard to different (homo) sexualities. The discourses of gender blurring, gender ambiguity, 'dev-iant' sexuality, indeterminate sexuality, etc. are rendered unimportant because all forms of sexuality are made visible and acceptable. There is no admission test, although competitors are asked to sign a declaration that they are competing 'in the gender in which they live their daily life.'²

Introduction

The Gay Games started out quite consciously as a public relations exercise in gender-normativity.³ It was to show that gay people played wholesome sport just like every other good citizen. By Gay Games IV the diverse gendering and sexuality of the communities embraced by the Gay Games were more fully included and affirmed. Drag queens at these Games played the public role of flag and place bearers – marching out before each of the city teams during the opening ceremony. Official sanctioning for the newly included figure-skating competition was not pursued, enabling skaters with a variety of sexual orientations, identities and styles to ice dance in the costumed, choreographed and partnered performance of their making. The Cultural Festival of these Games was rich in diverse and playful gendered and sexual representations and explorations. For the first time at the Gay Games transgender

¹ Pat Califia, *Sex Changes. The Politics of Transgenderism*. (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1997), p. 256.

² Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 159.

³ See Chapter Two for a complete account of the normative gendering during Gay Games I.

sport and cultural participants were included. Considering the rigid rules of the mainstream sports world that govern the separation of men and women's sport, this was not a straightforward accomplishment.

This chapter examines the history and politics of sex and gender ambiguity and difference at the Gay Games, particularly in relation to transgender participation in the sport program. The conservative nature of mainstream sport in naturalizing the binary oppositions of male and female, as well as that of heterosexuality and homosexuality, and valorizing the former, stand as the backdrop to this history. In fact, sport has a special place in society for reinforcing these standard versions of sex, gender and sexuality.

Discussions in Chapter five demonstrated how sex and gender, the central definers of personal and communal identity, have been far more variable across human cultures and history. With the advances in modern science and medicine this variability has increased. A number of questions can be asked about how the Gay Games included and represented the diversity of gendering and sexuality and the communities they define. Why did it take until the fourth Gay Games for this diversity to be embraced? What are the main issues and challenges of sex and gender difference for the philosophy, sports and cultural programs of the Games? What does all this mean for the larger society and mainstream sports world? Most importantly, what does this ultimately say about the play of sex, gender, sexuality and sport at the Gay Games themselves?

The Naturalisation of Sex and Sport

Most modern sports run separate events for men and women.⁴ This separatism is largely based on the assumption that all men have sporting advantages over all women, particularly in the areas of strength, speed and stamina. There is a certain arbitrariness to this advantage, however, as there are great variations within the physical capacities of one particular sex including differences in heart size, lung capacity, muscle mass and body fat. These differences traverse rather than parallel the divisions of male and female. Combine these variations within individuals with other important factors that determine athletic performance such as skill and fitness level, psychological aptitude and preparation, access to specialised sports facilities, equipment and other resources, and the assumption that all males have superior sports performances over all females looks quite spurious. Whilst statistically, most men may be taller and stronger than most women, there are many females who can run faster, jump higher and throw farther than many males.⁵

At the elite level of sport, where very small physical performance differences matter, top male athletes in sporting events emphasising strength, speed and stamina do have advantages. Physiologists have estimated that these elite sports men on average can perform from 10 – 18 % better than elite sportswomen in events emphasising these

⁴ There are exceptions to this such as equestrian and in sailing events at the Olympics – sports of skill and technique.

⁵ Mary Jo Kane makes this point very well in her journal article 'Resistance/ Transformation of the Oppositional Binary: Exposing Sport as a Continuum', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (May 1995), pp. 191-217. Kane argues that it is men rather than women who are essentially protected by the sex segregation practices in sport "when, for example, segregationist policies keep us from thinking about or seeing women outperform men" (p. 213).

attributes⁶. At the physiological level this difference is attributed primarily to the effects of significantly greater levels of testosterone during adolescence and early manhood on several features, including muscle mass and strength, the production of red blood cells (carrying greater quantities of oxygen), bone thickness, muscle glycogen storage and muscle protein synthesis.⁷ This makes a difference when adolescent boys and young men train and compete at an elite level in a particular sport emphasising strength, speed, stamina and physique.

Biology at this level of sports competition does matter. However, it is only part of the picture. There are other over determining social and political factors that are often ignored. Chapter Two demonstrated how women over the centuries have been prevented from striving for, and fully engaging in sports and physical activities. The institutionalisation of modern sport was shown to benefit men, to prove heterosexual and hegemonic masculinity and to reinforce, on quite a powerful level, the supposed superiority and privileges of men over women in Western societies. Women have been kept on the outer in this sports world by a medical discourse that represented women as unsuited to sport, and by a media discourse that represented women as passive sexual objects or as monsters, especially those who transgressed conservative gender boundaries by being lesbians, too muscular, or too good at sport.

Young girls are still discouraged from activities involving forceful physical exertion that may be deemed unfeminine, and they tend to drop out of sport during

⁶ David Lamb, *Physiology of Exercise Responses & Adaptations*, 2nd Edn, (1984), p. 300.
⁷ Lamb, *Physiology of Exercise Responses & Adaptations*, 2nd Edn, (1984), p. 359.

adolescence at much greater rates than boys of a similar age.⁸ Strength differences, embodied competence, confidence and assertion in forceful, space occupying movement of young males and females can also be significantly attributed to conservative, everyday gender socialisation. Whilst the separation of the sexes in sport is popularly justified on the grounds of a 'muscle-gap', there are other powerful social forces at work to emphasise and maintain this difference and keep the privileges and benefits of sport largely in the hands of males. We do not know what the differences in this muscle-gap might be if female participation was valued equally and women received comparable encouragement and resources. We do know, however, that sport is one of the most public and popular arenas for the display of the human body in modern society, and it is here that the naturalisation of sex difference occurs and male superiority is most noticeable.

During the time of cold war rivalry in the 1960s, eastern European women athletes and swimmers were so outstanding in their international sports performances that other nations began to question their status as women.⁹ Sex testing of female athletes was introduced at the Olympics and other international and national sports events to address these concerns and 'control femininity' (tests were officially termed 'femininity control'). For example, in 1966 a simple, crude and rather degrading test was used to eliminate the possibility of a male impersonating a female athlete. Female

⁸ Jim McKay, 'Sport and the Social Construction of Gender', in Lupton, G., Short, P., and Whip, R., *Society and Gender: An Introduction to Sociology* (Melbourne: MacMillan, 1992), pp 252-253.

⁹ John Hood-Williams, 'Sexing the Athletes', *Sociology of Sport Journal* (vol. 12. 1995), p. 300.

competitors were required to parade in the nude in front of a panel of medical doctors.¹⁰

The gynaecological examination was replaced at the 1967 European Athletic championships by chromosomal testing – a ‘real’ woman was determined by the possession of an XX on the microscope slide. Polish sprinter, Eva Klobukowska, had passed the nude parade at the Tokyo Olympics, having won a gold medal in the Polish 4x100 metres relay team. After having lived her life as a girl and woman, she was disgraced at these championships for failing the ‘real woman test’ – she had one chromosome too many. Klobukowska was stripped of her Olympic and other athletic medals and returned home in disgrace.¹¹

The IOC introduced the ‘buccal smear’ test at the Mexico Olympics of 1968. From this time female athletes were required to hold gender verification certificates which featured the athletes photo, height, weight and accreditation number of their chromosomal ‘femininity’ test.¹² The uncertainty of the ‘buccal smear’ test is significant – with a 20% error rate.¹³ The IOC used this test until 1992 when it was replaced by the more accurate Polymerase Chain Reaction test at the Albertville Olympics in 1992.¹⁴ Even this genetic determination of real womanhood had its limitations, and officials reverted to the buccal smear test at the Atlanta Olympics. Out of the 3,387 female athletes that underwent gender verification at the Atlanta

¹⁰ Berit Skirstad., ‘Gender Verification in Competitive Sport: Turning From Research to Action’, in T. Tannsjo and Claudio Tamburrini., *Values in Sport. Elitism, Nationalism, Gender Equality and the Scientific Manufacture of Winners* (London: E & FN Spon, 2000), p. 117.

¹¹ Skirstad., ‘Gender Verification in Competitive Sport’, p. 117.

¹² Skirstad., ‘Gender Verification in Competitive Sport’, p. 117.

¹³ Skirstad., ‘Gender Verification in Competitive Sport’, p. 117.

¹⁴ Skirstad., ‘Gender Verification in Competitive Sport’, p. 117.

Olympics, eight failed the test and had to complete further examination.¹⁵ Seven of these athletes who had lived their whole lives - physically, socially and psychologically - as girls and women - were classified as genetically male (XY). They had the condition Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome that involves unresponsiveness to testosterone produced by intra-abdominal atrophic testes. Approximately one in 400 females in Atlanta tested male and all were subsequently cleared with further testing.¹⁶ In most of these cases there is no competitive advantage attributable to these genetic variations of nature.¹⁷

There are a number of sex based chromosomal variations that do not fit humans neatly into two naturally based sexes (two-sexed model). Leading psychologist in the sex determination field, John Money, sums up this variability:

The assumption is that there are two separate roads, one leading from XY chromosomes at conception to manhood, the other from XX chromosomes to womanhood. The fact is that there are no two roads, but one road with a number of forks that turn in the male or female direction. Most of us turn in the same direction at each fork.¹⁸

Furthermore, there are people with the physical characteristics of both sexes – hermaphrodites – and people who have no gonads at all. Scouring the medical literature on intersexuality, biologist and historian of science Anne Fausto-Sterling

¹⁵Louis Elsas, Risa Hayes and Kasinathan Muralidharan., 'Gender Verification at the Centennial Olympic Games', *Journal of Medical Association of Georgia*, no. 86 (1997), p. 52. According to Ferguson-Smith this proportion is broadly consistent with what had occurred in at previous Olympic Games: Malcom Ferguson-Smith, 'Gender Verification and the Place of XY Females in Sport' in Mark Harries et al (eds), *Oxford Textbook of Sports Medicine*, 2nd Ed (1998), pp. 360-364. Also cited in Hayden Opie, 'Medico-legal Issues in Sport: The View from the Grandstand'. *Sydney Law Review*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2001), pp. 375-404. At the Barcelona Olympics eleven of the 2,406 female athletes registered had a y chromosome. See Bert Skirstad, 'Gender Verification in Competitive Sport. Turning from Research to Action', p. 120.

¹⁶ Elsas et al, 'Gender Verification at the Centennial Olympic Games'.

¹⁷ T. Tannsjo, *Values in Sport*, p. 117.

¹⁸ John Money, *Sexual Signatures: On Being a Man or a Woman*. Quoted in Alison Carlson. 'When is a Woman Not a Woman? For 24 years Maria Patino Thought She Was Female. Then She Failed the Sex Test' *Women's Sport and Fitness* vol. 24, no. 13 (1991), p. 2.

conservatively estimates the incidence of intersexuality as 1.7 percent of births.¹⁹ She points out that for a city with a population of 300,000 there would be 5,100 people “with varying degrees of intersexual development”.²⁰ Also, there are people who change their sex of birth through surgery, hormone treatment and a dramatic psychosocial transition – to become embodied as the other sex. These people are known in medical parlance as transsexuals.

During the 1990s a growing number of people began to openly question and challenge the polarized binary sex/gender system, some by theorising it differently, others by living it differently. Whilst transgender has been the umbrella term often used to describe these ‘gender benders and blenders’, other self-identified labels include: third gender, two-spirit, intersexed, PoMosexual and gender transient.²¹ This leads to the

¹⁹ Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing The Body. Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 51-54.

²⁰ Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing The Body*, pp. 51-54.

²¹ See the following sources for more comprehensive discussions of gender blending and bending: Anne Bolin. ‘Transcending and transgendering: male-to-female transexuals, dichotomy and diversity’, In Gilbert Herdt (ed.), *Third Sex, Third Gender*, pp. 447-486; Kate Borestein., *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us* (London: Routledge, 1994); Pat Califia., *Sex changes. The Politics of Transgenderism* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1997), pp. 221-245; Richard Ekin., *Male Femaling* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 154-162.; Richard Ekin and Dave King., ‘Blending Genders: Contributions to the Emerging Field of Transgender Studies’ *The International Journal of Transgenderism*, vol 1, no. 1(July-Sept 1997). pp. 1-17; Stephen Whittle. ‘Gender Fucking or Fucking Gender? Current Cultural Contributions to Theories of Gender Blending,’ in Ekins and King, *Blending Genders: Social Aspects of Cross-dressing and Sex-changing* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 196-214. For an excellent account of the historical development and political activism of one of the main intersexed organisations and advocates within the US see Cheryl Chase., ‘Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism’, *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies, The Transgender Issue* (Edited by Susan Stryker), vol. 4, no. 2 (1998), Duke University Press, pp. 189-213.

question as to where they can be placed within a sporting world that has been constructed largely in terms of the (genetically determined and 'natural') two-sexed model. Considering that the Gay Games since the 1990s has included intersexed, transgender and transsexual participants, and has sought sanctioning of sport events by mainstream sport authorities, this rigid determination of sex presents significant difficulties. Numerous Gay Games participants do not fit this two dimensional and oppositional biological definition of sex. Potentially, if not actually, mainstream sports rules may not be able to accommodate these human variations.

The implications of this 'femininity control' for female athletes has been significant, especially when considering that most mainstream sports competitions at the national and international level have required conformity to it. Women with an 'intersex' condition have found the tests a source of immense difficulty.²² The story of Spanish hurdler Maria Patino demonstrates how devastating failing the 'femininity control' can be.²³ Patino was found to have chromosomal irregularities that questions her 'womanhood'. She was shunned from competition by her national athletic federation, exposed in the media and experienced personal crises in her most important personal relationships and her very identity.²⁴

²² Because elite sportsmen do not have to prove their sex within the laboratory (a small number of men have the genetic make up of women and would pass 'femininity control' as it is genetically determined), any with an intersex condition' are not discovered.

²³ Skirstad, 'Gender Verification in Competitive Sport', pp. 120-121.

²⁴ After having already passed this test at 24 years of age at the Athletics World Championships in Helsinki, Patino forgot to bring her verification certificate to her next major international competition – the World University Games in Kobe. Because of this she was tested again in Kobe, and subsequent irregularities were found in her chromosomal make up. The Spanish sports federation forced her to lie about having an injury so she couldn't compete. After Kobe, this federation shunned her, and just before the opening of the next season's Spanish indoor Track and Field competition, she was told to withdraw from competitions forever. Defying the threats of exposure through the media by the Federation, she did compete and had to live through newspaper claims that she was a man. The

Through pressure from the media and Finnish geneticist Albert de la Chapelle, she was finally reinstated. Patino continues to fight against sex testing and gives a succinct description of her ordeal:

What happened to me was like being raped. I'm sure it's the same sense of incredible shame and violation. The only difference is that, in my case, the whole world was watching.²⁵

This story demonstrates the potentially devastating effects of a 'wrong' result and the injustice of defining sex so narrowly.

Many female athletes have reported raised anxiety levels over the results of this sex testing. World swimming champion and record holder, Shane Gould, going into her only Olympics at the young age of fifteen, feared she would be proven some sort of freak.²⁶ Testing seems absurd in cases where female athletes have had children and essentially reinforces an enduring underlying assumption: that women who are too good at sport are suspect. In a time when tight fitting and revealing competition attire and widespread drug testing that involves the eye witnessing of urine exiting directly from an athlete's body, sex testing to prevent female impersonation would appear unnecessary as well as unjust.

Random sex testing with the buccal smear was used at the Sydney 2000 Olympics and female athletes could also be tested on request from officials under specified

consequences did not end there; she also lost her coach and boyfriend, her athletic scholarship was taken away from her, her national athletic records were abolished, and she had to deal with daily public ridicule

²⁵ Quoted in Berit Skirstad. 'Gender Verification in Competitive Sport'. Originally quoted in A Carlson, 'When is a Woman Not a Woman?' *Women's Sport and Fitness*, March 1991, p. 29.

²⁶ Shane Gould. *Tumble Turns* (Pymble, NSW: Harper Collins, 1999), pp. 205-206.

circumstances.²⁷ The International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) returned to physical examinations in 1990 due to repeated discrepancies with genetic testing. These examinations were to be conducted by the national federations and 'any athletes holding an International Amateur Athletic Federation femininity certificate would not be exempt from further examinations'.²⁸ There appears to be a slight shift in approach to proof of 'true womanhood' however, as International sports bodies like the IAAF and the IOC have moved to a case-by-case approach when anomalies are found. The IAAF has left the issue of how to deal with transgender athletes in the hands of national track and field organisations – further evidence of this shift. However, the assumption that such testing is necessary still stands.

There is evidence indicating that some sportswomen want eligibility criteria set to ensure that only women can compete in women's sporting events. With official approval from the IOC, sports ethicist Berit Skirstad conducted a simple interview involving a sample of 115 female athletes (21 per cent of the total) from 42 countries competing in the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics.²⁹ The IOC Medical Commission wanted to find out how supportive female athletes were of these gender verification tests. 66 per cent of women agreed that they were necessary to ensure fairness. The same number thought the test was useful because it prevented rumours – confirming that they were 'real' women. Over 20 percent found the tests to be humiliating. The interviews also showed that the athletes were poorly informed about

²⁷ Australian Sports Commission web page outlining current Gender Verification procedures: http://www.sportnet.com.au/activeaustralia/national/targeted/.../topic_genderverification.ht, accessed 27/8/01.

²⁸ http://www.sportnet.com.au/activeaustralia/national/targeted/.../topic_genderverification.ht.

²⁹ Skirstad., 'Gender Verification in Competitive Sport', pp. 118-119.

the nature of the tests, and the more knowledge they had the more sceptical they were.³⁰

During the controversy over whether Renee Richards, a transsexual with credentials as a past elite-level male player, should be allowed to enter the US women's tennis circuit in 1976, the main US women's tennis associations were the most vocal in their opposition.³¹ As a direct result of this controversy, the United States Tennis Association, the Women's Tennis Association and the United States Open Committee introduced the requirement that the buccal smear test be used to determine eligibility in women's tennis. There are other examples of this concern of sportswomen to ensure that 'biological' women are the only competitors in women's sports events.³²

Elite athletes invest a great deal of time, effort and resources in their sporting careers and the rewards of honour, prestige, fame and fortune that come with success are considered as hard earned and precious. Sportswomen have had to overcome significant obstacles to gain even a measure of parity in sports events, recognition and rewards, as well as gain some control in this male dominated world. Suspicion of male privilege, the protection of women's domains in sport, and the essentialising of sexual differences may be additional consequences of these ongoing struggles.

³⁰ Skirstad., 'Gender Verification in Competitive Sport', pp.118-119.

³¹ Susan Birrell and Cheryl Cole 'Double Default: Renee Richards and the Construction and Naturalisation of Difference, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, vol. 7 (1990), pp. 5-6. Also in Susan Birrell and Cheryl Cole (eds) *Women, sport and culture*, (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1994), pp. 207-235.

³² See the debate over transgender and sport in Australian legislation cited on page of this chapter.

However, determining sex through a laboratory test is very problematic, as sex is a biological continuum rather than a black and white oppositional category. People with 'intersex conditions' constitute nearly two percent of the population and are part of the rich variation of humanity. Are women who live their lives from birth as women to be nullified as women through a simple lab test result? How then do we determine sex? This core shaper of human identity gets even more complex and multidimensional when we look at gender – the cultural superstructure determining masculine and feminine behaviours, scripts, styles, performances – which is largely based on male and female.

The Variability of Gender and its Performativity.

The cultural variability of gender is well recognized within sociology and anthropology. Scholars from these disciplines have researched the existence of a third gender and complex variations across gender and sex lines in some traditional societies; for instance, the berdache of the North American Indian, the Indonesian waria, the Filipino bayot, the Luban kitesha in parts of the Congo and the mati of Suriname.³³ This variability of gender is not a popularly held view however.

Commonly held assumptions about gender determine it as pre-social, pre-linguistic, and biologically essential, only of two reproducing varieties and the very essence of our being as humans. On this account, gender is conflated with sex and both are

³³ See chapter 5, pp for a discussion of these cultural variations on gender, sex and sexuality. Also see: Gilbert Herdt., 'Introduction', *Third Sex, Third Gender*, pp. 63-72; Niko Besnier., 'Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space', in Herdt., *Third Sex, Third Gender*, pp. 285-329; Will Roscoe, 'How to Become a Berdache: Towards a Unified Analysis of Gender Diversity', in Herdt., *Third Sex, Third Gender*, pp.329-373. Judith Shapiro, 'Transsexualism: Reflections on the Persistence of Gender and the Mutability of Sex', in Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (eds), *Body Guards. The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 248-279; Altman, *Global Sex* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2001), pp. 90-91.

immutable. Difference feminist and queer theorist Judith Butler considers these popular views produce gender identity boundaries that determine what we can actually be and do and what we cannot as gendered beings.

The body is situated in Butler's analysis as a central site to understand gender. The body performs gender repetitively and non-voluntaristically from infancy onwards. Hence, gender is not something we are, but rather something we do – constantly and mostly unreflexively to produce a centred sense of self. For Butler, “bodily gestures, movements and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding, gendered self”.³⁴ This everyday performance reinforces and perpetuates itself. This is not a performance put off or on at will like a theatre act or costume, as some of her critics have interpreted. Rather, “performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act’, but, rather, as reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names”.³⁵ Her use of citation does not imply an absolute original text that forms the basis of performance. Rather, it is an imaginary origin that the citation refers to and in turn reinforces.

Butler uses drag performances to illustrate this – the big hair, protruding breasts, fake eyelashes, over done eye make up and exaggerated hip movements have no origin in the female body. Everyday gender performed as ‘normal’ masculinity and femininity is also based on imaginary and fantasy gendered originals. Gendered performances that transgress these gender norms, such as drag acts, queerness, lesbianism, butch and camp homosexuality and the like can question and displace them. This is because

³⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 140.

³⁵ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 1.

bodies (sex) themselves are materialized within the regulatory framework of normative heterosexuality.

The sexed anatomy of the body is not the origin of gendered performance. Rather, this material body is brought to life by the over-determined and polarised gender performance demanded by normative heterosexuality. For Butler:

Because there is neither an essence that gender expresses or externalises nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit, collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions – and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them.³⁶

Feminist academic Barbara Brook sums up the centrality of this understanding of the body to Butler's work:

This interpretation is crucial to her disruption of that continuity between sexed anatomy, gender, and sexuality, which privileges the sexed anatomy as the origin of a singular, sexual identity.³⁷

Hence, Butler insists that there is no body that pre-exists discourse and that we are never out of a gendering framework.

Butler's understanding of the body and gendering can be applied to the problematics encountered earlier in sexing genetics. In an article which deals directly with the issue of determining the sex of athletes, Hood Williams points out the tautology that geneticists work in. In coming across males with XX chromosomes – Williams asks how did the geneticists know these people were males. If genetics determines sex,

³⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 140.

³⁷ Barbara Brook, *Feminist Perspectives on the Body* (London: Longman, 1999), p. 116.

they should be viewed as females. Even if they are seen as unusual men, they must have criteria for judging what a man is in the first place. The way that the biology of conception is commonly gendered in its description is another case in point. The ovum in this description is passive, waiting for active, aggressively swimming sperm racing to penetrate it first.

If the normative discourse shaping girls and women's engagement in sport, physical activity, forceful body comportment, the way they occupy space, assert themselves, are dressed, nourished, medicalised, etc were similar to boys and men's gendering, the differences in sporting performances emphasising strength, speed and stamina at an elite level would not be as significant. Biology is an interactive developmental process that is both shaped and shaping of the dominant discourses of sex and gender constitution. We are never out of these discourses that are based on the assumption of only two naturally occurring sex and genders that are only there to reproduce.

The ways that modern mainstream sport acts as a powerful social discourse and performance of normative heterosexual gendering were comprehensively explored in Chapter two of this thesis. Tom Waddell used sport as his closet so that he could enjoy the privileges of hegemonic, heterosexual masculinity. Sportswomen of all sexualities could be suspect in their gendering by playing sports emphasizing strength, speed, physique and aggression too well. The mainstream sports world proved to be a hostile and difficult place for gay and lesbian athletes. This contrasted with the Gay Games of the 1990s in which the diversity of sexualities on the sports fields and in cultural expression was embraced and celebrated. In fact the multiplicity of gender, sex and sexuality is made explicit when we look at the communities included in these

Games - and the nineteenth century normative gender games of modern mainstream sport stand in stark contrast.

Terminology

Before we move onto the main account of this multiplicity at the Gay Games it would be useful to clarify the use of several terms, namely sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and gender style. A person is shaped by their genetic make up, and the continuum of chromosomal and anatomical 'sex' will be important in determining their embodiment as a sexed being. A person is also shaped by their 'gender identity' – their self-perception of being male, female, in between, or fluid. Then there is 'sexual orientation' - the person's sexual and romantic attraction towards another person on the basis of their 'gender style' and sexed embodiment. 'Gender style' refers to the main ways that a person performs and engages with gender – such as butch, butch-femme, dyke, lipstick lesbian, androgynous style, camp, Queenie, macho, queer – to name a few within the Western gay and lesbian communities. The overriding discourses of heterosexual gender normativity and the queering of this within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities actually are the dominant shapers of these four attributes of sex/gender. There are many permutations to the interrelationships of these attributes as will be seen in the next section of this chapter.

As this is principally an historical and sociological study of sex, gender, sexuality, and sport, including the ways that the behaviour and discourses of the health and sport professionals themselves shape these meanings in our society, certain other terms will be clarified. For example, medical discourses largely frame terms such as transsexual,

intersex disorder and gender dysphoria as pathology. Understanding these terms as pathology can be useful in exposing ways that systems of power and meaning work to shape human identities. However, the medical renderings of the terms should not be seen as exclusive. The terminology favoured by the people being directly discussed or the umbrella terms transgender, differently sexed and gendered or gender blending will be used. As people who have undergone sex re-alignment surgery commonly use the term transsexual, it will also be employed.

Sex, Gender and Sexuality at the Gay Games

Gay Games I - III

Chapter three of this thesis outlined the ways that gender normativity, especially for gay men, was considered by the main organisers as vitally important in the outward image making of the first Gay Games. This was not as crucial for lesbian involvement at the Games, and sports such as rugby and boxing were originally placed on the sports program for women to enter. In fact, the Gay Games from its inception provided an affirming sports environment for women in general and lesbians in particular – one in which women could pursue their sporting passions without fear of transgressing the restrictive gender norms imposed on women within mainstream sport and culture. However, the most transgressive gendered styles that were either used to stereotype or to make more deviant membership of the lesbian community – such as the hyper-masculine butch dyke or leather queen – were excluded from official Gay Games ceremonies and imagery. Transgressive gendered performances such as drag performed by men were especially censored at these Games. A cultural festival was not organised because it had the potential to reinforce gay male stereotypes – dancing of any kind and especially with gender was not on.

This emphasis on normativity, especially for gay men, can be attributed to a number of factors. There was the relative gender conservatism of the key organizers and Games visionaries, in particular Tom Waddell. During the late 1970s a new type of super-macho gender style, originating in San Francisco, was popular amongst gay men. In contrast to heterosexual men displaying a more androgynous, fashion aware and narcissistic masculinity, gay men were sexualising and celebrating what appeared to be conventional masculinity by developing muscle, dressing in denim, check shirts, bovver boots, growing moustaches and cutting their hair short.³⁸

During the 1980s, gay and lesbian identity politics within many Western countries came to the fore. Civil rights and liberal reformism through education and mainstream political processes was pursued, demonstrating that lesbian and gay peoples were like everybody else – normal. The first Gay Games was essentially a celebration of gay and lesbian pride, identity and community making through the focus of sport.

Another of the principal aims of these Games was to bring the mostly separate communities of lesbians and gay men together. Gender separatism was widespread within many Western countries during the 1970s and 1980s, and essentialistic views of what constituted being male, female, gay and lesbian were especially grounded within radical lesbian feminist theory and practice as well as in commonly held beliefs within the heterosexual and homosexual communities. Outreach efforts of Gay Games I concentrated on engaging women and people of different ethnic and racial

³⁸ Dennis Altman, *The Homosexualisation of America*, (Beacon Press, Boston, 1983), p. 1. Also noted in Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion. Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (Virago Press, London, 1990), pp. 149-150.

backgrounds from within the US. Diversity was considered a male/female and ethnicity/race based issue. Community and inclusivity was only imagined on these parameters, and gender normativity was seen as vital to the success of the Gay Games.

The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic upon the gay and lesbian community formed the backdrop to Gay Games II. Through negative media coverage and right – wing backlash as well as the ravaging effects of this disease the gay and lesbian community had once again been pathologised, victimized and strengthened in the face of adversity. Efforts were centred on creating a community of care and support and the need to present and collectively celebrate the productive and health giving aspects of the Games.

There was one instance of controversy during Gay Games II that highlighted the position of differently gendered people. According to the Sports co-Chair of these Games, Sara Lewinstein, a participant questioned the sex of a competitor during the women’s tennis competition.³⁹ One of the highly competitive female players thought her opposition looked too masculine and demanded some sort of sex test. There were no policies governing sex determination or transgender participation at these Games. They hadn’t been considered. Sara was asked to investigate the complaint by the other Sports co Chair, Hal Herkenhoff. She questioned the player whose sex was in question but refused to proceed with any further more intrusive investigations. The apparently more masculine female tennis player was probably just that. Lewinstein ruled out female impersonation.

³⁹ Interview with Sara Lewinstein, November 1996, San Francisco.

A similar controversy took place during the women's tennis competition during Gay Games III. The Vice President of the newly formed Federation of Gay Games, Deb-Ann Thompson, recalls investigating the complaint of a women tennis player who suspected that her main rival was male.⁴⁰ There was a great deal of heat created by the complainant, who was a very serious competitor who demanded that the tennis event be conducted at a fair and professionally organised standard. Once again, there were no policies governing the determination of sex or the inclusion of differently sexed and gendered peoples at the Vancouver Gay Games.

Thompson was a practicing psychologist with expertise in working with transgendered and transexual people. She suspected that the competitor whose sex was questioned was a post-operative transsexual female – someone who had made the radical transition into fully identifying, living and being embodied as much as modern science permitted as a woman.⁴¹ Thompson saw no problem with including this tennis player in the woman's competition. The complainant did. Because this incident was so difficult to deal with and there was no policy on transgender participation at the Gay Games, Thompson was assigned the task of developing one for the Federation of Gay Games to inform subsequent Gay Games.

The organisers of Gay Game III also appear to have been relatively conservative in the public image they wished to present to the world. A number of Federation of Gay Games directors criticised the leading organisers for playing down the word 'gay' in

⁴⁰ Telephone interview with Deb-Ann Thompson, December 2001.

⁴¹ Interview with Thompson.

Gay Games official publicity. The theme of Gay Games III, 'Celebration' was the main term used on all materials and the 'g' word was given little or no mention.⁴²

This went against Gay Games' philosophy as the event was principally a demonstration of community visibility and pride. Furthermore, there is strong evidence to suggest that Games organisers marginalised the drag community because they were seen as potentially too transgressive. Queer was also a problematic term during Gay Games III. Organisers of the Cultural Festival at these Games wanted to use the term 'Queer' in their festival title. A heated debate ensued involving Gay Games Board members and some Federation of Gay Games members who did not like the term and its historically demeaning connotations – and those working with the Cultural Festival who identified as queer performers and committee members.⁴³

The relative gender conservatism of some of the key organisers of these Gay Games and the careful image making of these Games may have created a climate that was not conducive to the development of policy on including transgender participants.

However, there was a much broader context for this apparent lack of policy, which we will turn to now.

⁴² Interview with Shawn Kelly, Consulting Executive Director of Gay Games III, Executive Director of Gay Games II and the first Vice President of the Federation of Gay Games. Interview took place in San Francisco, November 1996.

⁴³ See Letter addressed to Gay Games III Board of Directors (same as MVA&AA) written by Karen Tully, member of the Queers in Arts Organising Committee (dated July 11, 1990). Archived in San Francisco Public Library: Federation of Gay Games Archive, Box 1, Series III, Gay Games III folder 8.

History of Transgender and Intersex Activism, Community Formation and Relationship to the Gay and Lesbian Communities

The broader historical reasons for this silence within the Gay Games of the 1980s and 1990 on the inclusion of differently sexed and gendered peoples are complex. The transgender communities of this period do not appear to have been aligned with the gay and lesbian communities. In fact, there was a rich history of hostility towards transgender people that emanated from separatist lesbian feminist collectives during the 1980s. Janice Raymond established the theoretical basis for this hostility in her influential book *The Transsexual Empire*.⁴⁴ She sees transsexualism as another medical intervention in which the patriarchal establishment attempt to wrest from women the power inherent in female biology, as well as being a political program to undercut feminist efforts to eradicate “sex-role stereotyping and oppression in this culture”.⁴⁵

However, according to Ekins, King and Califia, Raymonds’ work was used to silence dissenting views amongst academics concerning transgender issues, and in some circumstance to justify significant intolerance.⁴⁶ Califia documents a number of famous incidences in which transsexual women, who identify as lesbians, were

⁴⁴ Janice Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire, the Making of the She-male* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979).

⁴⁵ Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ Pat Califia., *Sex Changes*, pp. 86-120. Richard Ekins and Dave King., ‘Blending Genders: Contributions to the Emerging Field of Transgender Studies’ *The International Journal of Transgenderism*, vol 1, no. 1 (July-Sept 1997), pp. 12-13.

excluded from lesbian only events and organisations within the US.⁴⁷ Similar exclusionist practices appear to have occurred in other Western countries.⁴⁸ There was also significant prejudice experienced by transgender people within the gay male scene.⁴⁹

Sex re-alignment surgery had been performed within the US and a number of other Western countries since the 1960s, but there were a number of factors that acted against the formation of community identity and political activity. The medical men within the US who were the leaders in the sex reassignment process, such as Harry Benjamin, Richard Green and John Money, held very traditional views concerning gender and sexuality.⁵⁰ By using hormones and surgery, these doctors set out to 'cure' the disease of gender dysphoria and produce 'healthy' feminine heterosexual women and masculine heterosexual men. In this dominant medical view, transgender people had no intrinsic worth. Sex and gender ambiguity had to be eliminated. This was also the case for intersexed people who possessed ambiguous genitalia. Cosmetic surgery was often applied as 'the cure' to intersexed infants. Money documents this in his influential book *Man & Woman Boy & Girl*. Clitorises that are too large are excised

⁴⁷ For instance, Raymond and other lesbian feminists hostility toward the lesbian-feminist record business Olivia Records because Sandy Stone – a transgender woman was a member of its collective. Also, the ejection of transgendered women from the Michigan Womyn's Festival in 1991. See Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 106-107 and pp. 227-229.

⁴⁸ In Australia the first that come to mind are the heated debates over whether transgendered women should be included in the women only Women's Circus based in the Western suburbs of Melbourne Australia and the Lesbian Only Space that was to be established in Sydney during the mid 1990s.

⁴⁹ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 156-157. Also see; Members of the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California., 'MTF Transgender Activism in the Tenderloin and Beyond, 1966-1975: Commentary and Interview with Elliot Blackstone, in *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, The Transgender Issue*. vol 4, no.2 (1998), pp. 349-372 for an earlier account of this relationship. A comprehensive investigation into the lives of transgendered people in Australia was undertaken in 1995 and discrimination from gay men was noted as significant; R. Perkins, A. Griffin, and J. Jacobsen., *Transgender Lifestyles and HIV/AIDS Risk* (Kensington, N.S.W: School of Sociology, University of New South Wales, 1994), p. 58.

⁵⁰ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 52-86.

and penises that are too small are transformed into female genitalia.⁵¹ The dominant medical discourses of pathology, treatment and cure upon which the health care of many transgender and transsexual people was based provided the criteria upon which some transsexuals were allowed surgery and others were not.

The social discourses of normative gender are the determining shapers of sex in the medical practices dealing with intersexed and transsexual people. Pat Califia comments in her ground-breaking coverage of the history and politics of transgenderism that this gate-keeping power “had a huge impact on the way transsexuals viewed themselves and the way they presented themselves to each other and to the public”.⁵² As the midwives of transsexual identity, these conservative medical men actually worked against the formation of a transsexual community. Once cured of their dysphoria, they were to assimilate quietly into their new normal lives. Many transsexuals wished to do this anyway, and did not want to be associated with another ‘deviant’ (i.e. gay and lesbian) community. In fact, homophobia amongst transsexuals and transgender is not uncommon. Sex and gender normalisation, which is shaped by the discourse of heteronormativity, is what many desire. This is related to the popular view of the period that portrayed transgender people as homosexuals or extreme transvestites.⁵³

⁵¹ John Money and Anke A. Ehrhardt., *Man & Woman, Boy & Girl: The Differentiation and Dimorphism of Gender Identity from Conception to Maturity* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1972), pp. 52, 167 and 171. Also see chapter three of Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*, pp. 45-77. The Intersexual Rights Movement have developed a Phallo-meter – a small ruler depicting the medically permissible size of the phallus for males and females (clitoris) at birth – to use as a teaching tool in their efforts to change what they see as mutilating medical practices. See pages 59-60 of Fausto-Sterling for a more comprehensive account of this.

⁵² Califia, *Sex Changes*, p. 48.

⁵³ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 256-257.

Transgender activism started in the 1970s and principally consisted of challenging laws against female impersonation and policies making it difficult for transsexuals to change identification and other public records, as well as lobbying for greater access to sex reassignment, raising public awareness concerning transexuality and transvestism, and forming support and social groups for transgender people.⁵⁴

Activism by people with intersexed conditions began within the US during the early 1990s. Cheryl Chase, a person who at the age of eighteen months had a clitorrectomy to 'correct' ambiguous genitals, formed the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA). Chase had moved to San Francisco during the early 1990s, had met up with other gender activists and became "determined to bring ...healing experiences to other intersex people".⁵⁵

It wasn't until the early to mid 1990s that transgender activism became more radical. Community formation became more visible and fulsome and affiliations were established with the broader lesbian and gay community. Califia identifies the main reasons for this transformation, which include: the emergence of a stronger, larger and more visible female to male community; backlash against the exclusion by many within lesbian separatist communities of female transsexuals who identify as lesbian; a growing anger at the medical professions treatment of transgender peoples (labelled as mentally ill, dangerous effects of hormones, botched surgery, rejection because deemed unfit for surgery etc); the growing visibility of the transgender community which demonstrated an alternative to surgery; and a shift in gay activism during the

⁵⁴ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 221-222

⁵⁵ Cheryl Chase, 'Hermaphrodites With Attitude', pp. 196-197.

1990s with the AIDS epidemic. These last two reasons are vitally important and need further fleshing out.

Re-describing Sex/Gender

By the 1990s a number of prominent differently sexed and gendered peoples were writing as gender outlaws, emphasizing transience, fluidity and performativity in the way they lived as gendered beings. In Kate Borestein's *Gender Outlaw*, she talks about "the ability to freely and knowingly become one or many of a limitless number of genders for any length of time, at any rate of change. Gender fluidity recognizes no borders or rules of gender". A fluid identity for Borestein is one way to solve problems with boundaries. As a person's identity keeps shifting, so do individual borders and boundaries Borestein points out that: "It's hard to cross a boundary that keeps moving".⁵⁶ In this writing postmodern deconstruction and the queering of gender is emphasised. The influence of Foucault's work as well as Judith Butler's theory of 'gender performativity' provided the basis of much of this queering. Furthermore, the coalition politics which developed with ACT UP and the fight against government neglect, as well a widespread community prejudice over AIDS , inspired queer and difference activism. Gay men, lesbians, transgender, drug users, prostitutes, straight people, of all races were activists together in this life-threatening struggle.

In addition to these gender blending and bending writings, there appears to have been a growth in transgender activism, which questioned the entire binary sex and gender

⁵⁶ Borestein, *Gender Outlaw*, p. 52.

system. Cheryl Chase remembers arriving in San Francisco in 1992 to find “the sudden emergence of an entire transgender political movement”.⁵⁷ The main organisation representing this politics was Transgender Nation (TN), which had developed from the gay and lesbian action coalition based on transcending identity politics - Queer Nation (QN). Adopting similar tactics to QN in their fight against injustices in the crises, TN attracted media attention during “zaps” of the American Psychiatric Association’s annual convention. They were protesting against being labelled mentally ill. Chase also recounts the prolific new wave in gender scholarship within universities at this time:

In this context, intersex activist and theoretician Morgan Holmes could analyse her own clitoridectomy for her master’s thesis and have it taken seriously as academic work. Openly transsexual scholars Susan Stryker and Sandy Stone were visible in responsible academic positions at major universities. Stone’s *Empire Strikes Back: A Post transsexual Manifesto* refigured open, visible transsexuals not as gender conformists propping a system of rigid, binary sex but as “a set of embodied texts whose potential for productive disruption of structural sexualities and spectra of desire has yet to be explored”.⁵⁸

Chase’s life history encapsulates many of the challenges and hardships experienced by people with an ambiguous sex. At birth she was designated as a male with a micropenis by the attending medical experts and was brought up for the first eighteen months of her life as a boy baby. Her parents consulted various specialists for ‘sex determination’, and after a number of medical investigations they determined her ‘true sex’ as female. In Chase’s words:

They judged my genital appendage to be inadequate as a penis, too short to mark masculine status effectively or to penetrate females. As a female, however, I would be penetrable and potentially fertile. My anatomy having

⁵⁷ Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude’, p. 196.

⁵⁸ Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude’, p. 196, Sandy Stone, ‘The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto’, in Epstein and Straub (eds), *Body Guards*, pp. 280-304, quotation on p. 296.

been re-labelled as vagina, urethra, labia and outsized clitoris, my sex was determined by amputating my genital appendage.⁵⁹

The central marker of virile maleness – the possession of an effective (big enough, penetrating) penis – is evident here.

All traces of her existence as a boy were subsequently removed and her intersexuality was kept secret. She had more surgery when she was eight – her intra abdominal testes were trimmed away, and she also had to endure regular hospital visits that involved invasive procedures such as internal examinations and photography of her genitals. By adolescence Chase became aware that she had no clitoris or inner labia and that she was unable to orgasm. This set her on a mission to discover what had happened to her – no information let alone consent had been obtained previously for her sex determination. After exhaustive searching and questioning over a number of years, she learnt of her ‘true hermaphroditism’ at birth, her brief life as a boy and subsequent surgery and transformations.

She was living as a lesbian in her mid twenties at a time when “lesbianism and biologically based gender essentialism were virtually synonymous: men were rapists who caused war and environmental destruction; women were good and would heal the earth; lesbians were a superior form of being uncontaminated by “men’s energy”.⁶⁰ Chase had once possessed the dreaded phallus. She looked at herself as monstrous, felt mutilated, sexually damaged and silenced by the shame of being so ‘other’ as well as the lies that surrounded this whole issue. After a period of breakdown and suicidal

⁵⁹ Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude’, p. 193.

⁶⁰ Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude’, p. 194.

tendencies, she used her pain to become political. The existence of other radically active differently sexed and gendered peoples and organisations also supported and inspired her.

The organisation she founded for intersexed peoples, ISNA, was the first in the world. Its primary aims were to ‘create a community of intersex people who could provide peer support to deal with shame, stigma, grief and rage’ as well as a variety of practical issues like obtaining medical records and locating helpful therapists, etc.⁶¹ Their long term aim was to change the ways intersex infants are treated, including respecting intersex persons’ agency in regard to their own bodies, and recognising sexual and erotic functioning as much as reproductive capacity.

ISNA recognised that the overriding societal attitudes and belief systems concerning sex and gender were governed overwhelmingly by the binary two-sex model, and that it was more humane to assign a gender to the intersex infant. This gender was to be determined as the one most likely to “offer the child the greatest sense of comfort”.⁶² ISNA advocated that surgery to align sex and gender was not to be performed unless for reasons of medical emergency until the intersex child was of an age to decide for themselves.⁶³ ISNA also advocate that parents of intersex children be given “the conceptual tools and emotional support to accept their children’s physical differences”.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude’, pp. 197-198.

⁶² Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude’, p. 198.

⁶³ Medical reasons for surgery in infancy may include blocked or painful urination.

⁶⁴ Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude’, p. 198.

Gender assignment would appear essential considering the high degree of stigmatisation and the prospect of emotional harm caused by social rejection that many intersexuals have experienced due to the rigid hegemony of this two sex model and the consequent anxiety created by ambiguity.⁶⁵ Parents and intersex children would need this support. It appears that the medical management of intersex infants has changed little in the past forty years and that there is practically no research on the quality of life of post surgical intersexuals.⁶⁶ Ironically these medical practices are justified on the grounds of protecting the intersex person from severe prejudice and emotional harm.⁶⁷

Support and advocacy groups for intersexed peoples have proliferated since the mid 1990s, resulting in a growing and more vocal community. Within the context of 'gender verification' in sport, mainstream sports organisations cannot address the existence of people with an ambiguous sex. It appears that within a community that has a history and for some a politics of gender and sexuality transgression – gay men and lesbians have been slow to recognise the existence and needs of intersex peoples. By the new millennium it became common practice to speak of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer community – with intersex being the most recent add on. The Gay Games held in Sydney in 2002 was the first to recognise and attempt to include intersex participants.

⁶⁵ Chase, 'Hermaphrodites With Attitude', p.191.

⁶⁶ Chase, 'Hermaphrodites With Attitude', p.198. Also see Fausto-Faulding, *Sexing the Body*, chapter 3.

⁶⁷ Fausto- Faulding, *Sexing the Body*, chapter 3.

Transsexual and transgender peoples are some of the most discriminated against and stigmatised in many societies.⁶⁸ Hate crimes against them within places like the US appear to be on the increase.⁶⁹ The plasticity – performativity - of gender is evoked by the transformation of their sex, and this can make many very anxious. People made most nervous over the existence of transgender people appear to be young straight men. Those largely responsible for the most violent expression of this anxiety and hostility – enacted in brutal bullying, bashings, in the case of rape of Female to-Male (F-M) transgenders, and in murder, principally come from this demographic group. Califia see strong parallels with the hostility directed against gay men and lesbians and transgender people:

Straight culture reads much of the public expression of gay identity as gender transgression. To them, we're all part of the same garbage heap of sex-and-gender trash. It is practical points like this that can most easily draw queer and transactivists together.⁷⁰

Transsexuals literally have their sex changed surgically through genital, gonadal and hormonal intervention. They do this after living a very confusing, conflicting and difficult life, one in which their primary gender identity within a rigidly defining gender system does not match up with their sex. In this case it is gender that must be

⁶⁸ Luiz Roberto Mott, anthropologist and author of the book *Epidemic of Hate*, estimates that well over 1500 transsexuals and homosexuals have been murdered in Brazil over the past 17 years. This figure was quoted in an article by Ingrid Smit 'Transsexuals Marginalised' in *Gay rights*, Special Edition of *Wordt Vervolgd* (July/August 1998), pp. 22-26 – This is the monthly magazine of the Dutch section of Amnesty International. According to the report on the lives of transgender persons in Australia they experienced discrimination from all sections of society including their families and within the gay scene. Here is a telling quote from the report that sums this woeful story up well: "Taken together the findings on rates of discrimination, unemployment, dependency on welfare benefits, negative relationships with family, neighbours and workmates, and the figures on migration, isolation and suicide present a grim reality of the lives of many transgenders driven to desperate and extreme actions. It is doubtful is any other social group in Australian society would have a more depressing outlook". See R. Perkins, A. Griffin, and J. Jacobsen, *Transgender Lifestyles and HIV/AIDS Risk*, pp. 62.

⁶⁹ Califia, *Sex changes: discrimination against* – pp. 238-242 and *violence against* – pp. 230-234, 254-255.

⁷⁰ Califia, *Sex changes*, p. 256.

maintained as the binary opposition – and this is achieved through the detachment of gender from the apparent bedrock upon which it is based – sex. It is gender identity, rather than the supposed naturally driving anatomy and biology of sex, which is more powerful here. Whilst there is ample evidence of transgender people throughout history, medical science has made this transformation more complete.⁷¹ The ambiguity created by mismatching genitals and gender can at least on the surface be reduced, even erased by the surgeon's knife.⁷² It is after at least a one to two year period of hormonal therapy, correct gender performativity training and living their lives completely in the gender they are transitioning to, that sex reassignment surgery can be performed.⁷³

Legal Issues in Relation to Transgender and Intersex Persons

With the medicalisation and the growing activism of transgender and intersexed people came legislative definitions and the determination of rights. After a hearing conducted by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission in 1994 involving the testimonies of discrimination given by 50 transgender people, as well as research into this issue, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors outlawed discrimination against transsexuals in the areas of education, housing, accommodation and the workplace.⁷⁴ Less comprehensive anti-discrimination provisions for transsexuals exist in

⁷¹ See Herdt (ed.), *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*.

⁷² F-M sex realignment surgery has not been as 'successful' as that for Male-Female (M-F) transformations. Medical experts have spent less time, research and effort on the creation of a more satisfactory penis. In fact the penis that can be surgically created is so inadequate that most F-M do not even bother considering phalloplasty.

⁷³ Interview with Dr. Deb-Ann Thompson, practicing Clinical Psychologist with a large transgender practice.

⁷⁴ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 238-239.

Minneapolis and Minnesota.⁷⁵ According to Califia this groundbreaking legislation of San Francisco received satirical coverage within the *Wall Street Journal* and other significant papers, being portrayed as a 'ridiculous and frivolous action'.⁷⁶

Gay and lesbian rights had become reasonably well established in many US states, and especially within California and New York. However, the rights of transgender people were on much shakier grounds. In 1996, it became firmly established in European law that it was unlawful to discriminate against a transsexual person in employment.⁷⁷ The Netherlands had more comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in place protecting the rights of transgender people at this time, and it included provisions to enable post-operative transsexuals and people who were in serious 'gender transition' to participate in sport in the sex that they lived.

By the mid 1990s most states in Australia had legislation protecting the human rights of transgender and intersexed peoples, including those who were transitioning.⁷⁸

Within New South Wales (as early as 1977) and Victorian legislation, transgender people are recognized according to their gender identity – the gender in which they live their lives. As it is discriminatory to treat a transgender person differently from someone who lives according to their birth sex, gender verification procedures that would require proof of sex at birth as well as medical and social proof of sex/gender, are actually discriminatory if only applied to the transgender person.

⁷⁵ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 238-239.

⁷⁶ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 238-239.

⁷⁷ Califia, *Sex Changes*, pp. 238-239.

⁷⁸ Lisa Comben, *Transgender Issues in Sport: Problems, Solutions and the Future*. Research paper submitted for master of laws, University of Melbourne, 1996, pp. 15-18.

However, there are exceptions within the law that apply to sport. According to NSW law – which is relevant considering that Sydney hosted Gay Games VI in 2002 – ‘ A transgender person can be excluded from participation in any sport activity for members of the sex with which the transgender person identifies’.⁷⁹ This exclusion includes participation in fitness and recreational sports activities. During debates over this exemption, which occurred in the Legislative Council of NSW in 1996, The Women in Sport Foundation had this to say in favour of keeping it in place:

We believe that postoperative male transsexuals have an unfair physical advantage over females in sport because of their pre-existing superior anatomical and physiological characteristics, which develop as a result of puberty.⁸⁰

A new bill that eliminates these exclusions was before the NSW parliament during 2002.⁸¹ A similar debate was being conducted within the Australian Federal legislative sphere during the formulation of the 1995 Commonwealth Sexuality Discrimination Bill.⁸² Those advocating a similar exemption to cover sport within this legislation also argue that M-F transsexuals had a physiological advantage over birth females in sport “because their bones were exposed to higher doses of testosterone at puberty and have a greater muscle to fat ratio, and greater heart and lung capacity”.⁸³ These residual male characteristics could potentially provide unfair advantages. Transgender lobbyists, human rights advocates, medical experts and the Australian Sports

⁷⁹ Hayden Opie, ‘Medico-legal issues in sport: The view from the grandstand, pp. 375-404.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Andrew Sharpe, ‘Naturalising Sex differences through Sport. An Examination of the New South Wales Transgender Legislation’, *Alternative Law Review*, vol. 22, no. 1 (February 1997), p. 40, p. 2367. Originally from Hon. J. P. Hannaford, Debates of the Legislative Council, 4 June, 1996, p. 2367.

⁸¹ Asserted by representatives of the NSW Equal Opportunity Commission when they made a presentation at the Transgender and sport participation consultative forum held at the Sydney 2002 Gay Games Headquarters on April 10, 2001.

⁸² See Australian Sports Commission (ASC), *Additional Comments Submitted to the Australian Federal Government During the Formulation of the Sexuality Discrimination Bill* (1995).

⁸³ ASC, *Additional Comments Submitted to the Australian Federal Government* (1995).

Commission (ASC) took the position that this physiological advantage did not necessarily exist due to the fact that post operative transgenders had to continually undergo hormone therapy which significantly increased their oestrogen levels, and that their bodies no longer produced testosterone. The ASC quoted Doctor Elizabeth Ferris in their official submission:

Transgenders who have had an operation and take oestrogens are being as typically womanly as possible and will not do anything to tip their physical appearance over to the masculine side.

The assumption that anyone exposed to testosterone at puberty will be a star athlete is untrue “it’s like saying anyone over 5’10 will be a good volleyball player”.

Many genetic advantages for various sports are unfairly handed out at birth (and should these women be excluded on genetic basis due to an accident of birth), such as – Marfans Syndrome which cause women to grow to heights of 7 foot (many women basketballers and volleyballers have this syndrome). Also Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia which causes an over-supply of testosterone in women and produces extreme muscularity.⁸⁴

The ASC also cited the only exercise physiology research that they were aware of on a M-F transsexual athlete that had been competing within NSW. This research had been conducted at the University of NSW and indicated that this athlete fell within the ‘normal’ range for female athletes.⁸⁵ Because of this lack of research, the ASC recommended that the Federal Government commission further research into this area, although they were content to see the Sexuality Bill proceed.⁸⁶ In contrast, sporting bodies within Australia and internationally have been very slow in responding to the rights and challenges presented by the existence of transgender and intersexed persons. In 2000 only three sports organisations within Australia, all with

⁸⁴ ASC, *Additional Comments Submitted to the Australian Federal Government* (1995).

⁸⁵ ASC, *Additional Comments Submitted to the Australian Federal Government* (1995).

⁸⁶ ASC, *Additional Comments Submitted to the Australian Federal Government* (1995). The ASC stipulated a sunset clause for medical research into the sports performance of M-F post-operative transgenders to assess this fairness issue to take place immediately and the results be used to make any necessary legal adjustments. Whilst research was conducted transgender athletes should be able to compete in sport.

transsexual athletes competing in state level competitions, had transgender and sport participation policies.⁸⁷

One of these bodies – Women’s Golf Australia, is a world leader in such policy.

These progressive mainstream sports bodies go as far as including post-operative transsexuals and those who are about to undergo surgery.⁸⁸ Transgenders who for a variety of reasons cannot go through a complete sex change, are not considered.⁸⁹

Education of members on this issue is also provided to enable the human rights process and to reassure birth women that they are not being disadvantaged. However, the oppositional and ‘naturally given’ two-sex and two-gender systems clearly rule over concerns for human rights for most sports. The fact that sex and gender are far more fluid just does not fit with the traditions of sport.

Gay Games IV

Considering this history and especially the way sex is determined in mainstream sport, the Gay Games movement faced some significant challenges in relation to developing a transgender and sport participation policy by 1992. Deb-Ann Thompson consulted one of the peak bodies representing transgender people within the US – the International Foundation of Gender Education - in her policy formulation process.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ These include Women’s Golf Australia, Athletics New South Wales and Triathlon South Australia.

⁸⁸ Women’s Golf Australia Inc Transgender Policy. Also based on an interview with the Executive Director of WGA, Massie Moonie (August 2001, WGA headquarters) who was a key figure in the drafting of this policy and its implementation.

⁸⁹ The Executive Director of WGS, Massie Moonie, discussed the case of an over 50 year old transgender woman from Queensland, Australia, who wished to play golf in the women’s competition. She had transitioned after (his) her wife had died. She could not have sex realignment surgery (SRS) due to her age – and hence was excluded from the women’s competition on these medical grounds. Based on professional conversations with Moonie in August of 2000.

⁹⁰ Interview with Deb-Ann Thompson.

She based the policy largely on the criteria that had been established by the medical and psychological professions in determining the gender transitioning process. Transgender people had to meet these criteria before they could undergo sex realignment surgery (SRS).

According to Thompson, the intent of the Federation's policy was to include people who lived their lives fully (seriously) as members of the sex they had transitioned to and that this did not necessarily involve SRS. A number of medical conditions prohibited surgery, such as being HIV+, having herpes or hepatitis C. SRS itself was expensive and problematic. Whilst many transgender people may desire this medical transformation, it was out of reach for most seriously transitioned people.⁹¹ Hormone treatment over an ongoing two-year period was considered adequate to place the transitioning person in the right sports performance ranges for the gender they lived.

This was thought to be essential to ensure fair competition especially for birth females in sports emphasizing strength, stamina and physique. Participants were required to demonstrate their serious transition at the point of registration as it was hoped the matter would be settled from the start and the ugly situation that occurred during Gay Games III would be avoided.⁹²

⁹¹ According to Deb-Ann less than 10% of M-F's live as desired sex through SRS within the US. Due to the more expensive and invasive, and even less satisfactory SRS of F-M (hysterectomy, inability to construct a viable penis etc.) few F-M undergo full SRS, with most stopping at a radical mastectomy.

⁹² Interview with Deb-Ann Thompson.

Below is the actual 'Gender Transitioning Policy' adopted by the FGG and originally taken up by Gay Games IV:⁹³

These Policy and Procedures are set in place to protect and ensure the philosophies of the Gay Games as well as the Transitioning Gender Participant

These Policy and Procedures are not difficult to follow if a Gender Transitioning individual has been serious about what they are doing and are progressing in a healthy and legal direction.

1. Proof of a completed legal name change to match the desired gender role.
2. Letter from a medical physician stating that the participant has been actively involved in Hormone Treatment for a minimum of two full years without any time lapse. Letter also needs to explain current health condition.
3. Letter from a mental health professional therapist stating that the participant has been actively involved in psychotherapy for a minimum of eighteen months. Letter also needs to state that this participant had emotionally and psychologically transitioned into the desired gender role and why it would be impossible or severely detrimental for this individual to participate in their biologically born gender.
4. Proof of participant's cross-living in the desired gender role for a minimum of two years.

Those who comply with the above shall be treated equally as their gender implies. Right to appeal to Board Gender Identification Committee.

In the lead up to Gay Games IV, this policy created controversy within the transgender community of New York. The most radical transgender organisation 'Transsexual Menace' (TM) held a press conference and threatened to boycott the Games on the ground that this policy was discriminatory. According to Thompson, the Board of Directors of Gay Games IV bent to the wishes of TM and changed the policy in a specific area – the removal of clause 4. TM was still unhappy with the modified policy on the grounds that it relied too much on the authority of 'experts'.

⁹³ Federation of Gay Games minutes – and outlined in Policy and Procedures of Gay Games IV

For TM, gender identity was a deeply determining matter for the individual concerned – not one to be proved or pathology to be corrected by medical and psychological experts.

There were also practical difficulties with the policy, including the fact that changing ones name was not a straight forward process in some countries, that ongoing consultation with a medical or mental health professional was an unlikely occurrence for people who had already transitioned and lived their ‘truer’ identity for a number of years.⁹⁴ Furthermore, it appears that transgender people undergoing surgical procedures requiring general anaesthetic are required to cease their hormone treatment for up to four weeks to reduce the risk of Deep Vein Thrombosis.⁹⁵ This would cause them to have a lapse in the two-year hormone treatment period stipulated in this policy. The transgender community of New York was divided on this Gay Games Gender – Transitioning policy.

Gay Games operations manager, Roz Quarto, also faced some challenges with this policy. At a meeting of Sports co-Chairs who were responsible for organising the sports competitions for these Games, fears were voiced that the mainstream sport sanctioning they had arranged could be jeopardised by this new gender transitioning

⁹⁴ Information concerning the difficulties transgenders would face with this policy came from the Elizabeth Riley, Director of the Gender Centre in Sydney, NSW. Riley has lived as a transgender woman for the past twenty years. She is fully aware of the gay, lesbian and transgender history and politics within Australia and the main developments in this field within the US. Riley is the main advisor on transgender issues to the organizers formulating transgender policy for Gay Games VI in Sydney 2002. Elizabeth Riley’s observations concerning the Gay Games IV and V policies are contained in a facsimile: Memorandum from Elizabeth Riley, *Observations Concerning the Gay Games IV and V Policies. Facsimile addressed to Caroline Symons*, dated 16 July, 2001. Archived in Victoria University, Sunbury campus (VU), Caroline Symons Personal Gay Games Archive (CSGGPA). Transexual Menace are silent in print on these practical issues – although their activism against being pathologised is well documented.

⁹⁵ According to Elizabeth Riley.

policy.⁹⁶ Gaining legitimacy for a gay and lesbian event was hard enough with many of these mainstream sports bodies. Asking them to consider transgender participation may have been too much. Public awareness that the Gay Games would involve transgender participation had been raised by the TM press conference and subsequent media coverage. Official sports bodies may also have been informed about this controversy from the media coverage. Quarto also explained that sports involving contact such as flag football and soccer could raise insurance issues if they included M-F transitioning athletes:

If men transitioning to women played flag football or soccer with women and these women were hurt by stronger and larger transitioning women, insurance might not have protected us in possible litigation.⁹⁷

Games organisers were entering new and mostly un-chartered territory in their inclusion of transgender participants within the Gay Games sports program.

The policy was published in the official program that went to all registered athletes. According to Quarto, no transgender person went through the official channels to participate at these Games, or indicated any difficulty in participating because of the rules. Although she did believe that some did participate and ignored the rules.⁹⁸ Gay Games VI appears to have been the first international sports event to include transgender participants within its policy and procedures – including those who were in transition or who could not complete their sex change for financial and/or medical reasons.

⁹⁶ Email correspondence with Roz Quarto, dated Saturday June 2, 2001, 1:15 am. Archived in VU: CSGGPA.

⁹⁷ Email correspondence with Quarto, dated Saturday June 2, 2001.

⁹⁸ Email correspondence with Quarto, dated Saturday June 2, 2001.

Gay Games IV differed significantly from previous Gay Games in its inclusiveness and celebration of the diversity and the distinctiveness of gay, lesbian and queer culture. For instance, drag queens were not hidden away – instead they proudly carried the signs indicating the country in which Gay Games participants came from during the march in at the opening ceremony.⁹⁹ The cultural festival featured celebrity gay, lesbian and bisexual performers such as writer and actor Quentin Crisp, actor Sir Ian McKellan, comedians Sandra Bernhart and, dancer Bill T. Jones.¹⁰⁰ These artists expressed a variety of genders and sexualities through their performances, and each provided commentary, critique and celebration of their queer lives and shared culture.

The more naked sports events such as bodybuilding and swimming and the aesthetic sports such as diving and figure skating were very popular with near sell out audiences during finals. Sexuality and the body were obvious features of the commentary, ambience and athletic performances of the body building competition.¹⁰¹ Official sanctioning was not sought for the figure skating so that the competition could be run according to the needs and aspirations of the gay and lesbian participants.¹⁰² Same-sex pairs skated and danced with the heterosexist norms of the sport and some even made more overt political statements. For instance the gay men dressed in army fatigues with black tape stuck across their mouths. They were presenting a commentary on the US gays in the military policy of ‘don’t ask, don’t

⁹⁹ Gay Games IV Opening and Closing Ceremonies video. Producer, Kile Ozier. Lightning Dubbs, Hollywood, 1994. Also see Labrecque (ed.) *Unity: A Celebration of Gay Games IV and Stonewall* (San Francisco: Labrecque Publishing, 1994), p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ Labrecque, *Unity*, pp. 130-131. Also Official Program Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival.

¹⁰¹ There was concern expressed by some Body Building buffs that the commentary was too sexually explicit and detracted from the seriousness and spectacle of the sport itself. Based on conversations with Rosemary Mitchell – a long serving office bearer on the FGG and a frequent judge at gay and lesbian body building contests within California and at past Gay Games including New York.

¹⁰² Interview with Lisa Labrecque, San Francisco, November 1996. Lisa was involved in the organisation of the Figure Skating event at Gay Games IV.

tell' in which serving gays and lesbians are silenced and rendered invisible.¹⁰³

Sanctioning for this event was sought for Gay Games V, resulting in the competition being blacklisted by the International Skating Union (ISU) at the very last minute. To protect skaters who wished to compete in mainstream figure skating events the competition was changed to a demonstration and all competitors received a silver participation medal.¹⁰⁴ The ISU were very conservative in their competition requirements – normative gender and especially heterosexuality in pairs skating had to be demonstrated, at least through appropriate costumes, moves and male-female coupling.

In the officially sanctioned glossy post Gay Games IV commemorative book on these Games, as well as the 25 year celebration of Stonewall, its editor – and past FGG Board member – Lisa Labrecque set out to encapsulate the diversity of the gay and lesbian community and experiences of these events.¹⁰⁵ Diverse races, ethnicities, nationalities, sexualities, genders, gender styles, abilities, personalities, lifestyles, sporting, cultural and political events are captured mainly in full colour, lively photography. Sexualities, genders, gender styles and lifestyles include: butch, femme, lipstick lesbian, sports dyke, lesbian chic, androgynous style, radical lesbian feminist, gays and lesbians with families (children, parents, friends), ACT UP activist, queer, macho gay, leather queen and daddy, straight acting gay and lesbian, bear, drag queen, transgenders, bisexuals, heterosexuals, queer heterosexuals, etc are all captured in this commemorative photo book. Sporting achievements and the variety of

¹⁰³ See Labrecque, *Unity*, pp. 32-34.

¹⁰⁴ The researcher was present when this development was announced over the public address system at the Gay Games V figure skating venue. Also see the article on the figure skating at Gay Games V 'Melting the Ice with a Hot Double Axle' in the official Gay Games Newspaper *The Daily Friendship*, no.6 (Friday August 7, 1998), p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Labrecque, *Unity*. Based on discussions with Lisa.

sexualities and genderings of the athletes are celebrated. To make this diversity a feature of the Games outreach and inclusive policies aimed at engaging participants from racial minorities, gays and lesbians with disabilities – including HIV and AIDS - as well as ensuring greater female involvement (39% of sports participants) were actively pursued in their lead up.

The confluence of these Gay Games with the 25 year celebration of Stonewall – all held in the most cosmopolitan, gay and lesbian friendly, media, fashion and financial capital of the World – New York – also contributed significantly to this making and celebration of gay, lesbian and queer diversity. The Stonewall riots were actually led by drag queens and butch lesbians. Political activism was central to these 25-year celebrations and the radical, transgressive and the respectable forms of political organisation and action were commemorated and enacted. This brought many more into New York – primarily from around the US. The queering of gay and lesbian culture and politics, the greater visibility and activism of the transgender community, and the host city itself, made the Gay Games and Stonewall celebration a more inclusive and outwardly diverse event, especially in relation to gender and sexuality. Transgender participation was an important element of this diversity. It makes the allowable expression and enactment of sex, gender and sexuality at mainstream sports events and their overriding culture look very two dimensional – only two sexes, two normative genders and only one visible sexual orientation.

Gay Games V

This inclusiveness and affirmation of the diversity of gay, lesbian, queer and transgender communities was even more pronounced at Gay Games V, held in one of the most sexually tolerant cities in the world - Amsterdam. The official mascot for these Games was Maxine, a drag queen in national Dutch costume of pinafore, plaits and tulips. The mistress of ceremonies at the Opening Ceremony was Diva International – a M-F transsexual who had recently won the Eurovision song contest representing her native Israel. Many in Israel had wanted to deny her nationality due to her transgender status, especially the conservative orthodox Jews. The Gay Games community embraced her during her ceremonial performance. The cultural festival featured a photographic exhibition exploring the ambiguity of sex and gender as well as performances and events that pushed the boundaries of sexuality.¹⁰⁶ The International Women’s Festival staged erotic performances in dance and theatre.¹⁰⁷ The themes of this festival were “role models, dress codes and gender crossing”.¹⁰⁸ The body was displayed, eroticised and enjoyed throughout the week of the Games including the most public performances of the Canal Parade and the opening and closing ceremonies.¹⁰⁹

In the drafting of the transgender participation policy at these Gay Games, legal advice had to be sought to ensure that the policy was in line with equal opportunity

¹⁰⁶ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998: Sports, Culture, Festivals, Events, Exhibitions*, part of International Women’s Festival, p. 18 and 44.

¹⁰⁷ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ SGLG, *Official Program, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ Diary on Gay Games V – I was a participant and went to both ceremonies.

law of the Netherlands. Transgender people had rights protected in law here. A ruling was sought from the Netherlands Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), and the following policy was established:

Special Needs – Transgender Issues

Gay Games welcomes everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender. For participants whose passport meets their gender the following is not applicable. In order to be treated equally as their gender identification implies, participants must provide, upon request, proof of the following conditions to the Board Gender Identification Committee of Gay Games Amsterdam 1998:

*Proof of completed gender transition in active daily life for at least two years (photographs, personal correspondence, etc)

*Letter from a medical physician stating that the participant has been actively involved in hormone treatment for a minimum of two full years without any time lapse. Please pay attention to the regulations on drug testing.¹¹⁰

This policy appeared on the Gay Games V website well before the Games were held and appeared in the registration booklet and the show bag all participants received on registration. The Netherlands EOC also advised that the policy stipulated the removal of excess facial hair from M-F transgenders as this could put off birth female sports participants. The Games organisers, not wanting to be gender police, did not adhere to this advice.

This policy is considerably less involved than the one used in Gay Games IV. It overcomes the difficulty of proving a name change, is more flexible in its demands on proving gender transitioning, and does not use language or stipulate requirements that pathologise transgender persons. It also makes reference to the issue of drug testing in the bodybuilding and power lifting events. F-M transgenders could come up with a positive drug test if this testing was done immediately after taking one of their regular

¹¹⁰ Policy on Transgender Issues, contained in Special Needs section of Gay Games V website at address:<http://www.gaygames.nl/Amsterdam/specialneeds/index.html>, accessed 23 July 1998.

doses of testosterone. As with Gay Games IV, people with intersex conditions were not catered for in this policy. Genetic testing to prove ‘true womanhood’ has never been carried out at a Gay Games, and hence, numerous intersex conditions would not be identified anyway.

There were a number of transgender participants at the Amsterdam Gay Games who indicated that they were unhappy with this policy. Whilst I could not determine the precise reasons for this dissatisfaction, it appears from evidence given during the development of the transgender participation policy for Gay Games VI that they most probably included: difficulties with the no time lapse requirement due to medical complications, difficulties with proof of name and identity change, and what was perceived as an over reliance on medical experts in the proof of transitioning.¹¹¹

In fact, many contentious issues have arisen during the development of the Sydney 2002 Gay Games Gender policy, and it is worthwhile to turn to these to fully appreciate the conundrums of including practically all the different peoples that make up the transgender and intersexed communities within an international multi-sports event that has also striven to be an affirming sports festival for women and an officially sanctioned sports event for serious gay and lesbian competitors.

Fundamental issues of identity and difference politics, contradictions and tensions within the rhetoric and practice of the guiding philosophy of the Gay Games and the

¹¹¹ I tried to find out the exact nature of these complaints but received no response from the organizers within Amsterdam that were involved with the implementation of this policy. During the deliberations of policy development in the lead up to the 2002 Gay Games – of which the researcher was kept informed - discussions concerning difficulties experienced in Amsterdam in relation to their transgender participation policy appear to have revolved around the areas listed.

problematics of most official sports events being based on their being only two naturally determined and opposing sexes are revealed in this policy development.

Gay Games VI

The development of the Gender Policy for Gay Games VI was a drawn out process taking over eighteen months and involving community consultation with its main stakeholders. These included the FGG, the Board of Management of Sydney 2002, Sydney 2002 National Indigenous Advisory Committee, Moana Pacifika (Sydney 2002 Pacific Island Working Group), Sydney 2002 Women's Advisory Group, Sydney 2002 Asia Committee, the Gender Centre (Sydney) and Australian Intersex Support (Australia).¹¹² The process began with a community forum held at the Gay Games headquarters on April 10, 2001.¹¹³ At this meeting it was accepted in principle that an inclusive policy enabling transgender and intersex persons to participate in the Gay Games should be developed.

Women's Advisory Committee Chair, Kate Rowe, voiced concerns about possible unfair physiological advantages that M-F transgenders in the process of transitioning, may have in women's sports events. Further consultation ensued and legal advice was also sought to bring the policy in line with NSW anti-discrimination legislation. This problematises the use of the Amsterdam policy, as it is discriminatory to require

¹¹² See Memorandum on this Transgender Policy, written by Quentin Buckle, Director of Equity and Diversity Portfolio, Sydney 2002 Gay Games Board. This memorandum was emailed to interested parties by Suganthi Chandramohan, Outreach and Community Development Manager, Sydney 2002 Gay Games Ltd, dated, Thurs December 6, 2001, 11.05 am. Archived in VU: CSGGPA. Also see Sydney 2002, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games VI Gender Policy*, Adopted 10 July 2002 (final policy), p. 7. Archived in VU: CSGGPA.

¹¹³ I was informed of this meeting through two conversations – one with the Chair of the Women's Advisory Committee of Sydney 2002 – Kate Rowe. The other with the Director of the Gender Centre – Elizabeth Riley. These conversations occurred by phone in May and July of 2001 respectively and notes were taken by the researcher during the course of the conversations.

transgender persons to prove their sex/gender identity when the same is not required of other participants. It must be presumed that a person is of the sex they assert they are.¹¹⁴

By the end of 2001 the Amsterdam policy was presented as the best inclusive option. However, it was not satisfactory for a number of transgender groups. It was deemed “inadequate in relation to the medical and social reality of many transgender persons”.

¹¹⁵ The medical focus of the policy (surgery and/or medication backed) was also “inadequate to indigenous, Asia Pacific, African and other ‘ethno-local’ transgender identities”.¹¹⁶ Many transgender people living in these regions do not have access to Western medical practices. Their transgender identities are often based on indigenous customs and belief systems rather than the Western discourses of transgenderism. Some transgender groups who critiqued the very binary of sex and gender itself and identified as transgender rather than one of the two sexes. They wanted separate transgender sports events.¹¹⁷ Other transgenders were very much opposed to this third sex category.¹¹⁸

The Amsterdam policy was also inadequate in that it did not provide for intersex conditions.¹¹⁹ Some members of the Sydney 2002 Board of Management were concerned with issues of fairness and risk management in relation to the lack of

¹¹⁴ From legal notes attached to Women’s Golf Australia’s Transgender Participation policy. These notes and the policy were written by Moria Rayner – past Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria.

¹¹⁵ Quentin Buckles memorandum on the Sydney 2002 Transgender policy.

¹¹⁶ Buckles memorandum on the Sydney 2002 Transgender policy.

¹¹⁷ Buckles memorandum on the Sydney 2002 Transgender policy.

¹¹⁸ Buckles memorandum on the Sydney 2002 Transgender policy.

¹¹⁹ Buckles memorandum on the Sydney 2002 Transgender policy.

hormonal transitioning that was implied in the inclusion of these non medical, entirely identity based transgender persons, especially in women's sports events.¹²⁰

The Director of the Gender Centre, the peak advocacy and welfare organisation for transsexual and transgender persons within NSW, Elizabeth Riley, proposed a policy that did not require proof of identity or transitioning at the point of accreditation. According to her recommendations, all participants should be presumed the sex they assert they are without further question unless a complaint is made amongst competitors who are in contention for medals. This complaint has to be based on valid grounds and should be dealt with by an Appeals Board which uses the Amsterdam policy to determine the sex and gender identity of the competitor in question. This Appeals process was advocated by Riley as a compromise – understanding the sensitive issue of fairness in women's sports events. She makes a very strong point in her opposition to policies that medicalise and pathologise transgender identities and place the onus of proof “on all members of the transgender community to safeguard the Games against the unlikely situation of a non genuine participant seeking to gain some gender based advantage”.¹²¹

This is a tiresome burden that transgenders are often subjected to in all walks of life and one that is insulting to, and undermining of, our identities. If you have been a woman for twenty years it is really annoying to have to keep proving it.¹²²

¹²⁰ Buckles memorandum on the Sydney 2002 Transgender policy. Information on the Board's position was also provided by Kate Rowe.

¹²¹ Memorandum from Elizabeth Riley, *Observations Concerning the Gay Games IV and V Policies*, p. 2.

¹²² Memorandum from Elizabeth Riley, *Observations Concerning the Gay Games IV and V Policies*, p. 2.

FGG sports representatives in wrestling voiced concern over safety issues and insurance coverage, and the participation of transgender athletes in their sanctioned competition at the Gay Games.¹²³ Wrestling was a high contact sport involving strength and power, and according to the rule of the sanctioning body FILA (international wrestling body) “only people of the same gender could enter into bouts of competitions”. The inclusion of transgender persons, in particular F-M – could jeopardize the sanctioning of wrestling at the Gay Games on these grounds. An underlying assumption here was that F-M transgenders could be less strong and hence more vulnerable to injury – than birth male competitors. This issue was resolved within the final policy in the following way:

Safety

In events which involve body contact, the technical officials implementing the rules of the event have discretion in determining the circumstances which place participants at risk of injury and to take action to avoid such injury. Where the technical official at the event level is of the opinion there may be a risk of injury, subject to the rules of the particular sport, they may rule that an individual may not participate in that event/class/division. Where a technical official makes a decision on these grounds the affected person will be provided written notice of the decision and the reason.¹²⁴

Essentially ensuring the safety of the competition was placed in the hands of the technical officials.

The process of developing the Gender Policy of Gay Games VI was so complex that it was not until July 10, 2002 that it was finally adopted by the Sydney 2002 Board of Management. It took a further month to place it on the website to meet the official closing date of registration for these Games, which was just three months out from

¹²³ Stuart Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games Sports Department Final Report*, March 2003, p. 113.
¹²⁴ Sydney 2002, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games VI Gender Policy*, p. 9.

the Opening ceremony.¹²⁵ This policy was the most comprehensive and inclusive of all Gay Games so far. It encompasses diverse gender identities, including: men, women, transgender or intersex, as well as the ‘variety of ethno-local and Indigenous transgender identities’. The policy acknowledged gender as a social identity that “may or may not accord with the biological birth sex of the person (male, female or intersex)”¹²⁶ For the first time traditional indigenous transgender identities were included explicitly within sports and cultural programs. Indigenous Australian Sistergirls, Indonesian Waria, Thai Kathoey, South Asian Hijra and Samoan Faafafine were able to play the sport of their choice in the gender in which they lived.

All Gay Games VI participants had to go through an accreditation process before they could participate in the official Games programs. At accreditation, all people registered in a sport that was organised under male and female divisions were asked which gender division they wished to compete in. They were required to produce legal documentation such as passports, birth certificates and other identification to verify gender identity at accreditation. Where a person’s ‘official’ gender identity differed from the one they wished to participate in the Games, a number of alternative verification steps could be taken. These included:

1. A letter from a medical practitioner is provided stating that the participant has been actively involved in hormone treatment for a minimum of two full years; and/or
2. Proof of the participant living as the chosen or self-identified gender for a minimum of two years.¹²⁷

Proof of condition two could be verified by legal documents, driver’s license, evidence of employment, testimonials and statutory declarations, bank accounts and

¹²⁵ Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games Sports Department Final Report*, p. 112.

¹²⁶ Sydney 2002, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games VI Gender Policy*, p. 7.

¹²⁷ Sydney 2002, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games VI Gender Policy*, p. 9.

the like. Sydney 2002 accreditation officials had the discretionary powers to determine gender identity on condition two alone.¹²⁸ For indigenous transgenders, testimony from a “bonafide indigenous community organisation or Australian Indigenous community worker” was also acceptable for Transgender/Sistergirl status.¹²⁹

There were 41 transgender participants officially registered during Gay Games VI, and 26 of these were involved in the sports program.¹³⁰ Over 150 transgenders had expressed an interest in or paid/registered for the Games by the final end of the registration period in August of 2002.¹³¹ The figure of 41 may not be the complete number of transgender participants, as those with appropriate paperwork may not have declared their status since their identity papers had corresponded directly with their gender identity, and they may not have wished to be known as transgender. Nonetheless, this appears to have been the largest number of transgender participants recorded for any Gay Games so far.

There were a number of thorny issues relating to the sports program and transgender participation that had to be accounted for within this Gender Policy. One of these was the breaking of records (state, national or international) by transgender and intersex peoples. Another was drug testing at the Games. Sydney 2002 Gay Games stated that they would make every effort to encourage sporting bodies and technical officials governing sanctioned and non-sanctioned sports events to recognise the gender

¹²⁸ Sydney 2002, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games VI Gender Policy*, p. 9.

¹²⁹ Sydney 2002, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games VI Gender Policy*, p. 9.

¹³⁰ Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games Sports Department Final Report*, p. 112.

¹³¹ Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games Sports Department Final Report*, p. 112. You could complete a form indicating your interest in participating in Gay Games VI without actually registering. Through lodging this interest form you were kept up to date with Gay Games news and promotional materials.

identity verified during accreditation. Sydney 2002 also acknowledged that they could not “enforce such policy on autonomous sporting or cultural bodies or associations”.¹³² People left it up to the sanctioning body to determine the actual recording of records and performances whose legal identity documents did not agree with their social gender identity on accreditation.

Drug testing during the Gay Games presents further conundrums and policy inconsistencies when considered alongside this Gender Policy. For instance, M-F transgender participants who have not undergone hormonal or surgical ‘treatment’ will have testosterone levels of average males, whilst possibly competing in the female sports divisions. This may have an impact at the top performance level in the power and strength events, and would be detected through drug testing. Furthermore, transgenders on hormone therapy such as testosterone (F-M) will also test positive for anabolic steroids. The inconsistencies further problematise the drug testing push of the FGG.¹³³

Netball and Transgender Participation

The sports of netball and volleyball experienced the largest numbers of transgender participants during Gay Games VI. I gained an insight into the organisation of the netball through a phone conversation with the main organiser and Gay Games VI staff

¹³² Sydney 2002, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games VI Gender Policy*, p. 8.

¹³³ Borrie indicates that the FGG are strong proponents of drug testing during the Gay Games in his report *Sydney 2002 Gay Games and Cultural Festival Sports Department Final Report*, pp. 108-110.

member, Chris Mueller.¹³⁴ There were eight indigenous netball teams (representing 56% of all netball participants) of which seven identified as transgender (representing 44% of all netball participants). These players originated from Palm Island, Northern Queensland (Sistergirls), Somoa (fa'afafines), Tonga (fa'afafines) and Papua New Guinea. Notably only one non-indigenous player identified as transgender.

Netball was a non-sanctioned event and minimal assistance was given in the organisation and officiating of the competition by Netball NSW or Australia.¹³⁵ The competition itself attracted a total of 157 registrations and 15 teams.¹³⁶ There were divisions for teams of men, women and mixed teams, all of which were ungraded. Transgenders could compete in all divisions, however transgender teams could not play against biological women's teams given the physical disparity between biological women and the transgender participants and therefore transgenders played in a separate women's division.¹³⁷ Five transgender teams entered this women's division, one entered the men's competition and all transgenders played in the mixed competition. Individual transgenders played in the biological women's team, however, competition rules only allowed one transgender player per team. In the mixed team division, with a ruling of 6 men and 4 women, transgenders were counted

¹³⁴ Phone conversation with Chris Muller, manager of the netball competition, Sydney 2002 Gay Games. Conducted on October 12 2003. Muller agreed to check through this written section on the netball competition at Gay Games VI to ensure it's accuracy as well as provide informed consent to it's inclusion in this thesis.

¹³⁵ Netball Australia assisted in the promotion of the Gay Games to potential participants and in the recruitment of officials with a mail out of a promotional flyer to all members as well as a global membership email. These strategies were unsuccessful in attracting participants or officials. Muller principally used gay and lesbian as well as sporting and friendship networks to achieve this involvement. A retired senior office bearer from Netball NSW acted as competitions manager and gave advice up until a week before the Gay Games took place. Muller did most of the sport management and all of the day-to-day event management and the competition draw.

¹³⁶ Borrie, *Sydney 2002 Gay Games and Cultural Festival Sports Department Final Report*,

¹³⁷ Samoan and Tongan men who live as transgender peoples, like Samoan and Tongan men generally, can be very large and strong.

as men to provide fair competition given the particular large size of the Samoans and Tongans and to minimise injury.

The competition draw evolved and changed throughout the weeks preceding the Games as well as during the Games themselves, and flexibility in the management of the event was essential. This was due to the lack of email availability to communicate competition details, incorrect registration details and the uncertainty of players attending on the day. Typically transgenders often did not register as transgender, but as male or female, and registered in teams of up to 20. The diverse divisions, genderings, cultural differences and understandings of players, and a variety of motivations that drove participants and teams, added further complexity to event organisation. For instance, transgender players could use up to three names and identities, including the name on their passport, their birth name and their stage/persona name. During the competition there were disputes between transgender teams over the bonafide credentials of some sistergirls. Questioning centred on whether they were real sistergirls.

Some netball teams and players were very serious about the competition and outcome; others emphasised the playful, social and participative atmosphere of the netball competition. Mueller recounted having numerous mid-competition meetings to resolve competition discrepancies and to reinforce the pleasure, participation and inclusiveness principles of the Gay Games. During promotion of the netball, Mueller found that non-transgender women were fearful of injury and possible biological advantage of M-F transgenders and this probably resulted in poor early registration of biological women players.

Notwithstanding the major complexities in the organisation of the netball competition, Mueller also described them as very enjoyable, playful and rewarding. They culminated with a medal ceremony and party. The broad range of competition divisions resulted in the awarding of practically all teams with medals. Colourful costumes marking the indigenous and transgender heritage of teams featured during these celebrations along with a variety of music for dancing, enjoying and performing. The netball competition of Gay Games VI provides an excellent example of alternative and adaptive games – in the spirit of the New Games movement discussed in the second chapter of this thesis outlining alternative sports traditions. Multi-cultural differences, based here on a variety of genderings and sexualities, were central to the organisation of this Gay Games sports competition.

Furthermore, this marked a break through for the Gay Games in that the international varieties of transgender and same-sex desire were being acknowledged within the sports program. The Gender Policy of Sydney 2002 potentially and actually took the sports program beyond Western conceptions of sex/gender/sexuality. However, organisational complexities may deter other sports within the Gay Games to take on such a model. Officially sanctioned sports would face further difficulties with a more fluid and diverse gendered basis for sports competitions. Can gender divisions be eliminated and issues of equity and fairness within the organisation of the sports competition be determined in other ways?

Transformative Sport ?

If the emphasis on participation and doing one's personal best were taken on face value, then the division of sex would only be relevant in relation to the safety and enjoyment of the sport. On a social level, women and men often enjoy their sporting involvement in sex segregated teams – as has been demonstrated by the community, identity, friendship, loving and sexual relationships enjoyed by many lesbians who have played team sports such as softball, hockey, soccer and cricket. In many individual sports, where men and women mix in training and sometimes in competition (mixed relays in swimming and track, or in masters events that are organised according to time or ability rather than sex for instance) the principle of personal best if applied literally could eliminate the division of the sport along the lines of male and female. Masters swimming events are often conducted in this way – with heats being determined by common time rather than by sex. Golf is another sport that could be readily organised in such a way – with ability and handicapping being the primary criteria used to create a fair, inclusive and competitive environment.

In fact, if the organisers shaping the Gay Games took the guiding principles to their logical conclusion many of the conundrums of including transgender and intersex persons within the sports events of the Gay Games could be overcome with the adoption of a sports program based on ability. Doing one's personal best would be a reward in itself along with the pleasure of participating. Past FGG President and operations manager of the New York Gay Games Roz Quarto has made such a suggestion, pointing out that there are plenty of opportunities for members of the gay,

lesbian and queer communities to win awards in other international, regional, national and local gay and lesbian sports events as well as in mainstream competitions.¹³⁸ The conundrums of sport based on a limited two- sexed model could be lessened through the introduction of team sports that are designed to encourage the interaction between all sexes – Korfball comes to mind here and other team sports could also be adapted or developed along similar principles. This would make the Gay Games really unique – a transformative sports experience that lived up to its guiding philosophy for all of the ‘Gay Games family’.

The full inclusion of transgender and intersex people within the Gay Games certainly tests the principles of the Games and highlights the tensions between the reformist and transformative sports agendas. However, by adopting the latter, the goals of mainstreaming and mass popularity and understandability on an international scale would certainly be compromised.

Conclusion

Mainstream sport is the main public arena in which the oppositional twos of sex and of gender are most prominently displayed, naturalised, conserved and reinforced as well as contested. Transgender and intersex persons are largely excluded from this world of sport because they defy the two-sex system that is so adamantly enforced. Gay men and lesbians are silenced and excluded from this world because they are popularly conceived as gender transgressors – the two-gender system being produced by heteronormativity. In this simple popularly held view gay men supposedly cannot

¹³⁸ Interview with Quarto, December 1996.

play sport well because they are in some way effeminate – they don't compete well with other men in such tests of masculinity, nor do they compete to possess and penetrate women.

Lesbians make the mistake of being too good at sport – they are considered too masculine, aggressive, strong, independent and unavailable to men. Women who are too good at sport, regardless of their sexuality, can risk being seen as suspect in their sex and gender. Femininity is affirmed and controlled in the world of mainstream sport to ensure normality in gender and in sex (sex testing). The main beneficiaries of this two sexed and gendered system are heterosexual sports loving men – not withstanding those other major shapers of privilege – class, race and ability/disability.

The communities of the Gay Games – gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people of the world – have little in common except their sex and gender transgression. They challenge heteronormativity and the gender order. Both the sports and especially the cultural events of the Gay Games, at least since Gay Games IV, have provided opportunities to include and affirm a diversity of gender styles and sexualities. There has also been a determination to overcome the difficulties of including differently sexed peoples within the sports program. The Gay Games are leaders in the world in these inclusive policies and practices. And so they should be – for where else can transgender and intersex people feel respected in their own right and be included in an affirming environment? The Gay Games may need to stage a more imaginative and transformative sports program if the conundrums of sex and sport are to be overcome. However, this may reduce its mass appeal – the power of the rigid belief in only two sexes is strong, embedded in the very sub strata of our

understanding of what is natural and of the very language that shapes this understanding.

Most Games participants are relatively well off white gay men and lesbians who believe in the naturalness of the two-sex system. Furthermore, most were socialised into the traditional ways of doing sport – and this is what they enjoy and want to do well in. A plethora of gender styles still have the supposed bedrock of two sexes. The plethora of sexualities - orientations, pleasures, and practices – are still bound up in certain anatomically sexed configurations. The majority – gay men desire men’s bodies and lesbians desire women’s bodies. Or is it this straight forward? Queering sex, understanding the ambiguity of sex and gender – emphasizing differences as well as celebrating a vast variety of sexed and gendered identities may be the way to go. This is certainly a developing pattern of recent Gay Games, most prominently practiced and played within the cultural festival, ceremonies and parties.

The ambiguities and complexities of the transgender and intersex sport participation policy developed for the Sydney 2002 Gay Games encapsulate much of this diversity in a world of sport that is still predominantly two-dimensional. The netball competition of Gay Games VI went beyond this two-dimensionality to successfully include indigenous transgenders from the Asia and Pacific region. This also marked greater internationalisation of the identities of transgender and same-sex desire within this hallmark international GLBTQ event.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This thesis has documented the social history of the Gay Games from its inception in 1980 up until 2000. This has included five Gay Games, as well as some of the major policy developments of the Sydney 2002 Gay Games. Over these twenty years the Games have grown from being principally a local Californian multi-sports event to a complex international mega-event featuring over 30 sports, all of the cultural and artistic disciplines, human rights conferences and activism, dance parties, spectacular official ceremonies and a plethora of other related GLBTQI events. The Gay Games have become the peak international sport and cultural event for GLBTQI communities worldwide. They have also provided an important catalyst for the formation of gay and lesbian sport and cultural organisations, especially within Western nations.

This significant growth in the size, scope and complexity of the Gay Games was based on a number of major social, economic and political developments shaping everyday life, particularly in Western countries over the past thirty years. These developments include social change and the growth of social movements coming out of the civil rights, second wave feminism, and gay liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Lesbians and gay men were forming visible and vibrant communities, especially in major cosmopolitan Western cities. They were demanding the end to their discrimination by the State and within society. Many lesbians were influenced by and /or involved with the women's movement and were critical of the patriarchal gender order dominating society. Gay owned and directed media, businesses, political organisations, gay and lesbian pride and cultural events and a growing leisure industry were integral aspects of gay community life. The founding and growth of gay and

lesbian sports organisations during this period occurred in fertile soil. These foundations of community life were supportive, affirming and sustaining, especially to gays and lesbians that often suffered within a directly discriminating and oppressive wider society.

Broad economic forces were also shown to be at work here. 'Out and proud' gay identities and community making was also fashioned by the economic and social conditions of late capitalism. These include mass consumption, the commodification of the body and sexuality, mass media and niche marketing, and the importance of image, that is, life as a visual display predicated on the consumption of certain 'lifestyle' defining commodities. Many gay men and lesbians, influenced by the health and fitness boom of the 1980s and 1990s, have shaped their identities and lifestyles through exercise, sport, travel, fashion, entertainment etc. – and for some – participating in the Gay Games. These marketing, media and travel trends have a global impact, influencing the formation of gay and lesbian identities within non-Western countries as well. The Gay Games is also part of this global fashioning.

All of the Gay Games have been hosted by large cosmopolitan Western cities with large, visible and politically effective gay and lesbian communities. Cities such as San Francisco, Vancouver, New York, Amsterdam and Sydney have diverse populations and progressive liberal democratic political and social climates. Trend setting San Francisco was a most fitting setting for the first Gay Games, having a well established gay community and infrastructure, a ready source of volunteers and an excellent working relationship with the civic authorities and City government.

By the 1990s the economic impact of hallmark sporting and cultural events were appreciated by local and national governments, and the securing of such events had become a major competition between cities. The power of the 'pink dollar' was also coming to be recognised by mainstream commercial and government bodies. The organisers of Gay Games III were the first to use this commercial lure. By Gay Games IV, held in the supposed commercial and media capital of the world – New York City – the Games were being marketed and sold as a most lucrative mega-event. This trend was developed further with the Gay Games held in Amsterdam and Sydney, and underlines two of the main developments of the Games during the 1990s – their commercialisation and mainstreaming.

The growth and development of the Gay Games has also been due to the individual and collective efforts of the Games organisers and the host gay and lesbian community. Through leadership, vision, creativity, talent, and hard work they have secured, planned, organised and staged the Games. In effect, they had to build significantly upon the gay and lesbian sport infrastructure within their respective cities.

Organisers also faced unique challenges in their organisational efforts. These included: staging the Gay Games during the devastating AIDS crisis that dramatically affected the gay community and dealing with homophobic incidents, whether it be attacks by conservative religious groups, obstruction by certain public officials, legal battles with the USOC over the use of the word 'Olympic' or with restrictive US immigration policy with respect to those living with HIV and AIDS.

Games organisers have not only overcome significant obstacles to stage a Gay Games, they have also worked with their diverse and at times very political GLBTQI communities to ensure an inclusive and participatory event. The resultant relatively democratic organisational structure of the Games host and the inclusive policies and practices affecting the management and conduct of the sport and cultural events added further organisational complexities. These complexities multiplied with the growth in the Cultural program, and with the Amsterdam and Sydney Games, the introduction and development of the Social Issues program. These were also staged to widen the participation base and commercial appeal of the Games. By 1998 the Gay Games had become a huge organisational undertaking.

The main visionary of the Gay Games, Tom Waddell, was a critic of what many consider the elitism of mainstream sports events such as the Olympics, and envisaged the Gay Games as an exemplary sporting event for gay and lesbian communities worldwide. Waddell believed that gay and lesbian peoples from diverse sporting abilities, age groups, and racial, ethnic, religious and political backgrounds could be brought together in a spirit of mutual exploration and understanding. This would be achieved through 'wholesome' involvement in sporting competition that emphasised participation and doing one's personal best', in a sporting environment that was inclusive and supportive of all. Organisers valued sports participation because it was thought to give a 'healthy' focus to people's lives, an opportunity to meet others and form friendships as well as provide validation and an avenue for personal achievement.

A number of strategies were used to operationalise these principles. The Gay Games opening and closing ceremonies and promotional material emphasised this philosophy to participants, the rules of sports competition were modified to include different age groups and ability levels and there were no medal tallies or recording of records. The bringing together of the separate men's and women's communities also occurred at the Gay Games, and women were well represented within the organisational structure and programs of the Games.

These aspects of the Gay Games make them a significantly different and alternative multi-sports event compared to the aggressively competitive and exclusionary basis of the most celebrated mainstream sports events. The Gay Games could readily be placed within the same league as the Workers Sports Movement of the 1920s and 1930s and the World Masters Games, the latter being organised three years after the Gay Games I. Similarities of the Gay Games with these alternative multi-sports events include: an emphasis on inclusion, equality and participation within the sports program and a recasting of competition as mutual striving in a friendly atmosphere.

These early organisers also envisaged the Gay Games as exemplarily in its capacity to mainstream the gay and lesbian community within the larger society. It was believed that through featuring gay and lesbian people playing 'wholesome' sport many of the negative societal stereotypes haunting this community could be exploded. These included the supposed effeminacy of gay men, the supposed obsession of all gay people with sex, and their supposed irresponsible, hedonistic and 'deviant' lifestyles. Sports, especially those involving the demonstration of strength, power, speed and combat, were excellent social practices to affirm ones masculinity as a gay male.

The gender conservatism of the first Gay Games has been well documented in this thesis. To prove that the Gay Games was a legitimate event and that gay people were 'normal' certain sections of the gay and lesbian community were essentially excluded from the event and/or more flamboyant and explicitly sexual behaviours were censored (i.e. wearing leather regalia, wearing/ performing drag). Sex had no place at these Gay Games. The organisation of 'proper' multi-sports event was important as it sent the 'right' message out to mainstream society, allowed bridges to be built between mainstream and gay sport and gave serious gay and lesbian sportspeople the 'appropriate' sporting environment. These aspects of the Gay Games underline its mainstreaming and assimilationist nature.

By the 1990s the gay and lesbian community within many Western nations had diversified and included a number of newly formed and politicised community groups such as transgender, intersex and queer peoples. Through the development of difference politics and the greater global reach of the Gay Games, a plethora of gendered and sexual identities were included within the Gay Games 'family'. Non-Western, indigenous same-sex attracted and transgender peoples were included within the Cultural and the Social Issues program of Gay Games V and within the Gender policy and Sports program of Gay Games VI. Whilst elements of gender conservatism were evident within the sports program of Gay Games IV and V, the overall Gay Games outlook was one of celebrating this gender and sexual diversity and the differences that make the GLBTQI communities unique, transgressive and even radical.

The inclusive policies and practices of the Gay Games also had to take into account this diverse participation base. The Gay Games have been shown to be exemplary in the formulation of 'cutting edge' policies that include peoples living with HIV and AIDS, as well as transgender and intersex peoples, within the many programs of the Games, especially the Sports program. Furthermore, the Gay Games have also actively promoted the equal participation and organisational involvement of women. This principle was not systematically and thoroughly implemented until Gay Games V. However, it has been a key goal throughout the history of the Gay Games. By comparison there are very few mainstream sports organisations and events of similar magnitude that could demonstrate this pro-activity in gender parity. Lesbian communities have a history of feminist (liberal, radical and queer) awareness and activism and there have been strong women within the host organisations and the FGG.

The equalisation of the Gay Games Cultural program and the advent of the Social Issues program during the 1990s were driven by cultural interests within the FGG and the host cities, the ambitious and creative visions of host organisers, as well as the desire to include the diverse participant base of the Gay Games. The different, unique, transgressive, boundary pushing and radical elements of the GLBTQI communities and their expression of this difference and/or radicalism are most explicit within the Cultural program of the Games. The explicit political aspects of GLBTQI human rights and more radical activism appears to have been given the floor in the Social Issues program and the Cultural program of the past two Gay Games as well as during the Stonewall 25 celebrations in 1994.

However, the Gay Games Sports program has also provided an avenue for critiquing and contesting heterosexist traditions within sport. This has especially occurred within the figure skating and the ballroom dancing. Concerns with ambiguity in gender and sexuality that are 'overdetermined' within the mainstream sports world, are played with within many aspects of the Games Sports program. Whilst not overturning hegemonic gender norms and the gender order, they are played with and contested more than they are conserved, especially at the more recent Gay Games.

The Gay Games have been shown to be political in that they are about an oppressed and largely silenced peoples quite courageously organising what has become a mega-event, often under challenging circumstances, to celebrate their own sporting, cultural and political communities, achievements and pleasures. The Gay Games are also effective politically in the use of leisure and pleasure to engage communities, build collective identity and esteem, raise consciousness and awareness within these communities as well as within the broader society in which these Games have taken place.

At the grass roots level, the Gay Games, as with the growing gay and lesbian sports movement worldwide provides an important avenue for GLBTQI peoples to enjoy and achieve in sport in an environment that is welcoming and supportive. Games organisers have also striven to provide a health-promoting environment for people living with HIV and AIDS. The public nature of the Gay Games also means that participation becomes an act of 'coming into' the GLBTQ community and 'coming out' to the wider society. Individual and community transformation can occur through this 'coming out'. This stands in contrast to the invisibility and repression of their

‘potentially disruptive’ gender and sexuality in mainstream straight society, especially in sport.

On the other hand, conducting a separate Gay Games has been questioned by some as going against the aims of integrating gay and lesbian peoples more fully into the wider society. On this account the freedom experienced within the Games can be seen as taking place within a ‘ghettoised’ space. This especially occurs for GLBTQI people that pursue their sport or cultural activity within a gay sports club/organisation.

Consequently, this separation can provide mainstream sports and cultural organisations with an easy excuse not to confront their homophobia and discriminatory practices. This is one of a number of tensions at work within the history of the Gay Games movement. While building bridges between gay and mainstream sport, dispelling negative stereotypes and reducing discrimination are deliberate goals of the Gay Games, this separatism issue remains contentious of the Gay Games.

Another major tension within the history of the Gay Games concerns that between mainstreaming and the transformative aspects of the Games sports program. From the first Games the organisers sought mainstream sport sanctioning for the sports events. By the Sydney 2002 Gay Games the FGG had introduced their ‘Red Book’ to govern the rules and organisation of sport within the Games. Whilst every effort has been made to include the diverse communities of the Games in the sports program and recreational and elite competition levels are provided for, it appears that legitimisation through sanctioning and the use of international mainstream sport rules remains an important concern. As Pronger points out: sanctioning “proves that lesbian and gay

sports are conducted in strict accordance with the norms of sport”.¹ These norms are often heterosexist and have as their basis the two-sexed model, which do not automatically and/or neatly fit more fluid and diverse sexed, gendered and sexual embodiment and lives of GLBTQI peoples.

Furthermore, it was demonstrated that the Gay Games emphasis on participation, inclusion and personal best can be at odds with not only sanctioning, but also the drug testing policy. The FGG push for drug testing during the Games – another example of their concern with legitimation – can actually exclude certain member of the GLBTQI community that require drugs for serious medical conditions. The drug testing policy is essentially contradicted by the policy governing the participation of transgender peoples. Considering that the Gay Games are not an elite and highly competitive sports event, and that other equivalent multi-sport events such as the WMG do not demand drug testing, this policy is also inappropriate for the Gay Games.

Another key tension within the organisational history of the Gay Games has been that between professionalisation and the community orientation of the event. Gay Games organisers often expressed their frustration with the community politics they had to regularly ‘deal’ within their organisational deliberations. The size and complexity of the event, which was driven by the objective of providing the biggest and best, as well as something for everyone – had its downside. The past four Gay Games have resulted in significant deficit. Gay Games VI filed for bankruptcy, the City government of Amsterdam bailed out Gay Games V and Gay Games VI is still in the

¹ Brian Pronger, ‘Homosexuality and Sport: Who’s Winning?’ in J. McKay, M. Messner and D. Sabo, *Masculinities, Gender Relations and Sport* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 232.

hands of administrators. The FGG recently became so concerned that they pulled out of the final negotiations with the organisation set to host Gay Games VII, Montreal 2006, because the latter were projecting a Games involving 24,000 participants and nearly twice the budget to that of Sydney 2002. Like a number of other international mega-events including the Olympics and the World Masters Games, gigantism has become a problematic of the Gay Games.

Most of these major tensions that have been documented throughout this history of the Gay Games centre on the overriding themes of mainstreaming and transformation. Gay Games organisers and the FGG envisage the Games principally as a mainstreaming exercise best achieved through the delivery of a fiscally and organisationally sound, 'legitimate' sporting event that demonstrates the many talents and achievements of GLBT peoples. A transformative sports model that critiques the heterosexist basis of many sports has not been on the Gay Games agenda because of these concerns with legitimisation. Furthermore, the main participants of the Gay Games are gay and lesbian sports enthusiasts from the US, Canada, Europe and Australia. They are strongly socialised within the traditions of 'mainstream' sport. Such sport essentially provides the common understanding and mass appeal of the Gay Games.

The potentially transformative aspects of the Gay Games such as its guiding philosophy of inclusion and participation, its political effects and its cutting edge inclusive policies and practices has also been constantly at play in this Games history. They have presented the most obvious challenge to the mainstreaming aspects through the Cultural and Social Issues program. The diversity of Gay Games

participants and participation is also challenging to the ‘mainstream’ and is potentially transformative. However, the main way this tension between ‘mainstreaming’ and transformation is resolved is through the provision of a massive smorgasbord of program offerings to participate in, watch and be part of. This is essentially a ‘supermarket of consumer choices’ based within the liberal democratic and consumer tradition. There is something for everybody.

Implications for Future Gay Games

The FGG has most recently produced a document titled ‘The Image of the Gay Games’ which addresses these tensions and issues directly, and sets out the direction for future Gay Games.² The scaling down of the Gay Games is advocated to ensure fiscal viability and respectability. Going back to the basic principles of the Gay Games are also advocated. Waddell is quoted as having the idea to create Gay Games to break down stereotypes of gays and lesbians in sport, build bridges between mainstream and GLBT sports bodies and foster the creation of local and international opportunities for GLBT people to play sport in an inclusive environment. According to this document the Sports program is “The heart and soul of the Gay Games”.³

The Cultural program is singled out as the main cause of budgetary blowout and is to be scaled back significantly in future Gay Games. Interestingly the core cultural activities to be retained include the original ones of Gay Games II – bands, Choruses and the Rainbow Run, as well as one visual art event and the possibility of a set of

² FGG, ‘Image of the Gay Games’, document produced by the FGG Strategic Planning Committee at the Annual FGG Board meeting held in Chicago in November 2002. Downloaded from the FGG Website: <http://www.gaygames.org>.

³ FGG, ‘Image of the Gay Games’, p. 4.

“additional participatory activities”.⁴ The Social Issues program is not named in this document, however, it is encompassed in the section on ‘Ancillary Events’, which include conferences, workshops, human rights activities and parties. These events are also deemed non-core and the host organisation is instructed not to allocate “resources to organising, promoting or delivering such events”.⁵ The FGG also expresses its desire to ensure that the conferences of the Gay Games, if staged, must be related to the mission, image and vision of the FGG and the Gay Games movement.

There is also a section outlining the appropriate contents of the official Gay Games ceremonies. It is interesting to note what is emphasised in this section and I will quote it in some detail:

Opening ceremonies should:

- Be inspirational;
- Reflect the Games’ sport and cultural constituency;
- Emphasize sport and culture;
- Embrace the variety of LGBT experience;
- Assist the community in presenting a broader representation of the global LGBT community (i.e., there is more to the LGBT community beyond the typical media-glorified images of leather community, dykes on bikes, men in drag, etc. The Hosts should assist the Federation in our effort to present a broader diversity of our community); and
- Assist the community to evolve new paradigms by showing the true diversity of the global LGBT community, thus breaking down the barriers of freedom and respect and demonstrating that our community cannot be defined by or limited to stereotypes.⁶

The last two bullet points are also reminiscent of the concerns with negative stereotypes, drag queens, leather men and women, of the first three Gay Games. In

⁴ FGG, ‘Image of the Gay Games’. p. 10.

⁵ FGG, ‘Image of the Gay Games’, p. 10.

⁶ FGG, ‘Image of the Gay Games’, p. 8. The FGG use LGBT to denote lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in this document. For purposes of consistency I have used GLBTQI or GLBT as the shorter corresponding version.

fact, these concerns with the more flamboyant members of the GLBTQI community appear over laboured. Perhaps the FGG Directors who drafted and approved this document were uncomfortable with the profile of drag queens, transgender performers and dykes on bikes that have appeared in the past three Gay Games Opening ceremonies. This is not to say that the demonstration of the diversity of the GLBTQI community is not a desirable thing, balance appears to be the issue rather than exclusion.

The FGG wish for more control over the Gay Games. The organisations hosting the Gay Games from Gay Games IV onwards have had a difficult relationship with the FGG. These host organisations appear less conservative in their cultural, political and sporting outlook. This may also be the result of the diverse and quite political grass roots community input to a Gay Games, which occurs through the host organisation and city actually staging the Gay Games.

This FGG document suggests a return to the beginnings of the Gay Games. However, it is not a full circle. The diversity of the contemporary GLBTQI community and the internationalisation of the Gay Games movement present organisers of the Gay Games with opportunities and challenges different to those of 1982. The instability and uncertainty of international relations, security and travel, and the increasing fear and conservatism that this insecurity can breed, may also produce a very different international climate for future Gay Games.

The Gay Games is essentially an alternative Games. In an intransigent homophobic and heterosexist world the staging of the Gay Games, the implementation of

progressive participation policies and the development of an extensive international and lesbian sports movement are significant achievements. Their inclusive policies and practices along with their affirmation and celebration of GLBTQI sport and culture make them unique. Participants and organisers of the Gay Games should recognise and build upon these unique achievements, especially the diversity of sporting communities, genderings and sexualities.

Appendix 1 Gay Games: Summary Table¹

Gay Games Host City Year Games title/theme	Gay Games I San Francisco 1982 "Challenge"	Gay Games II San Francisco 1986 "Triumph"	Gay Games III Vancouver 1990 "Celebration '90"	Gay Games IV New York 1994 "Unity '94"	Gay Games V Amsterdam 1998 "Friendship through Sport and Culture"
Sports Participants	1,350	3,482	7,250 (4,821 from US)	10,864 (7,951 US)	14,843 (1/2 from Europe)
Cultural Participants		Uncounted	1,500	4,130?	1,200 First time equal status
Visitors / Spectators	50,000	75,000	200,000	1 million	200,000 (official GG report)
Workers/Volunteers	1,000	1,200	3,000	6,600 plus 1,500 officials, 1,400 ceremony	3,042
Budget Deficit/surplus	\$387,000 (US)	\$ 650,000 (US) In surplus	Over \$1.5 million (US) In deficit \$76,500 (US)	\$6.5 million (US) In deficit - \$700,000 bankrupt	\$10 million (US), 14 million guilders. In deficit \$ 1.9 million (US)
Sponsorship	In kind		\$350,000 (CAN) \$267,000 (US)	\$1US million	\$US 2.5-2.7 million
Sponsorship sources	Local G&L		Private companies, small local and regional government,	5 major and 20 minor Some L&G	Majority from Government (local, national)

¹ Figures are based on archival sources. Brenda Pitts has produced a very useful summary table of 'Gay Games Facts' and the table below includes some of her data as well. Pitts and Ayers analysed visitor spending and the economic scale of Gay Games V through surveying 223 visitors and Games participants, and calculated the economic impact of \$350 million (US). See Brenda Pitts and E. Kevin Ayers, 'An Analysis of Visitor Spending and Economic Scale on Amsterdam from the Gay Games V, 1998', *International Journal of Sport Management*, vol. 2 (2001), pp 134-151. The 'facts table' is also in this article: p.135.

				G&L					
Estimated economic impact	Not known	Not known	\$50 million (US)		NYC est. \$111 million				50 corporate, 16 foundations \$350 million (US) Pitts*, Official – 140 million guilders
Sports events	16	17 – 7 sanctioned (state/national) Procession of Arts – most disciplines	28, 3 exhibition		31				30, 6 demo sports
Cultural events			All disciplines Women's festival, 'Dancecelebrations'		30 All disciplines Celebrities				Equal with sport Community Arts program All disciplines Recreation program
Social Issues Program					Stonewall Human Rights Conference and meeting program				Intro of Social Issues and Human Rights Program, Storytelling Festival Women's Festival
Countries represented	11 (official program listing)	18 (official program listing)	30, 5 Continents		45, 6 Continents				78
Women as % of participants	Unknown	44%?	43%		32-36%				42% 50% Of European participants
Women as % of workers	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		Unknown				46% paid staff, just under half of all managers
Diversity inclusive policies/practices	Age division in swim Mixed sex relays Outreach to minorities and women in US	Age divisions Promotion of 'Elders' involvement Inclusion of PLW HIV/AIDS	Disability/special needs, HIV Beginner/novice categories Age groups		Transgender Disability/special needs, HIV support, beginner novice, competitive, age groupings, limited scholarships to disadvantaged				Transgender Women's Policy Disability/special needs inc HIV 235 Scholarships – esp. developing countries and Eastern European participants Community focused

Challenges, Issues, Achievements	USOC vs SFAA legal battle Immigration issue Successful first international g&l event	HIV/AIDS epidemic USOC legal continues Gay Games as ongoing	Christian Fundamentalist threat South Africa issue First Games outside US, new host	Immigration waiver for HIV sufferers Working with USOC World profile – Gay Games on “map” Use of celebrities Break thru in Corporate sponsorship	Increased Government support Equalisation of Culture and Intro of new Programs Really took over this old walking city
Political/civic support	SF Mayor, City Hall	As per previous Games	Vancouver /city supportive – people and Government Fed politicians on Honorary BOM	President Clinton supports NY Mayor, City Hall Diversity and Economic impact well recognised	Government supports financial and symbolic, Prime Minister at Opening Ceremony Amsterdam and Netherlands projects image of tolerance and integration for g&l people – what is possible
Main unique features	1st Gay Games	Established Gay Games – resilient in face of AIDS	Out of US – viable with new host – continuity Growth 7 fold since GGI	International, high profile mega event With Stonewall – biggest gathering ever of international g&l Commercial Games	Show case of tolerance and integration – the Netherlands Growth by 14 times Gay Games I Commercial and community Games
Media	200 press	?	?	1,200 accredited media personnel, used NY media capital, excellent coverage in NY Times and some international coverage	1,000 TV Broadcast of Opening Ceremony – 1 million viewers

Appendix 2 Glossary

Organisations and Events

Not all organisations and events appearing within the thesis are listed here. If an organisation has been named on more than one occasion, and/or it is of significant standing, it has been included.

- ACT-UP** Coalition To Unleash Power. Founded in the US in the early 1990s. Has offshoot organisations within Europe and Australia. A radical coalition of peoples dedicated to protest, civil disruption and political action that highlights the plight of HIV/AIDS sufferers and the perceived lack of action by government and health authorities on this issue. ACT-UP was informed by Queer politics and a radical critique of heterosexism.
- ASC** Australian Sports Commission. Peak body within Australia funding, representing and developing Australian sport at the grass roots and the elite level. Principal source of funding is from the Australian Commonwealth Government.
- ASDA** Australian Sports Drug Agency. Established in 1995 to educate the Australian sporting community on the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport and to carry out regular drug testing protocols within this community and during major sports events held within Australia that require the drug testing of athletes.
- Australia
Gaymes** Held yearly or biannually throughout the latter half of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s. A mass participatory multi-sports event for gay and lesbian peoples within Australia. Hosted by the peak gay and lesbian sports body of one of the main cities within Australia and rotated around the states.
- BGLSF** British Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation. Established in 1994. The peak umbrella body representing gay and lesbian sports organisations and interests within Britain.
- CDC** United States Centre for Disease Control. The main medical organisation within the US responsible for the coordination of research and infectious disease control protocols and practices.

- COC** Dutch Association for the Integration of Homosexuals. Founded in the late 1950s. The peak political, social, cultural and welfare body for gays and lesbians within the Netherlands.
- EGLSF** The European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation. Founded in 1989. The peak body representing European gay and lesbian sports organisations and interests. It principally provides information on such sporting opportunities to interested people within Europe, as well as establishing communication networks for gay and lesbian sports organisations and individuals. EGLSF also selects the gay sports organisation/city, which will host the biannual EuroGames.
- EuroGames** A mass participatory multi-sports festival held every two years within one of the main cities of Europe throughout the 1990s. This event is also based on the principles of participation and inclusion.
- FGG** The Federation of Gay Games. Founded in 1989. The overseeing body of the international Gay Games. It is made up of Directors representing gay and lesbian sports organisations from around the world as well as key organisers of past Gay Games. The FGG makes policy concerning the conduct of the Gay Games, selects and contracts the host city for the Gay Games, promotes the Games principles of inclusion, participation and personal best as well as the Gay Games movement itself. Its headquarters are in San Francisco.
- FILA** Peak international mainstream sports organisation for Olympic style competitive wrestling.
- GISAH** Gay Integration Through Sport and Art Holland. Founded in 1989. The umbrella organisation representing sport and cultural interests and organisations for gays and lesbians within the Netherlands.
- IAAF** International Amateur Athletic Federation. Peak international sports organisation for track and field.
- IGLA** International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics. Founded in 1990 at Gay Games III. Represents the aquatic sports of swimming, diving and waterpolo and the traditions of the Pink Flamingo. Selects the host Aquatic club/city to stage the annual International Gay and Lesbian Aquatic Championships. Predominantly based within North America, although interest in the competitive aquatics sports have also been growing within Europe.
- IGLFA** International Gay and Lesbian Football Association.
- ILGA** International Lesbian and Gay Association. The peak international human rights and political association representing gays and lesbians. It has tended to conceptualise gay identity and rights in Western terms.

- INBA International Natural Body Building Association. Peak international mainstream organisation overseeing the sport of body building (drug free emphasis).
- IPF International Powerlifting Federation. Peak international mainstream organisation overseeing the sport of powerlifting.
- IOC International Olympic Committee. Peak international organisation that oversees the Olympic Games and exerts significant influence over international mainstream competitive sport.
- LGBA Lesbian and Gay Bands of America
- MVA&AA Metropolitan Vancouver Arts and Athletics Association. The gay and lesbian sports and cultural organisation that staged Gay Games III in Vancouver, Canada in 1990.
- QN Queer Nation. Radical political movement that sprang from the politics of neglect within the US concerning the AIDS crisis. Also a response to the right-wing and 'anti-gay' politics of US President Ronald Regan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Queer politics principally involved the decentering of the ethnic model of gay and lesbian identity, a radical critique of heterosexism, and in your face political action and protest over these issues and the AIDS crisis.
- SFAA San Francisco Arts and Athletics Inc. Founded in 1981. The organisation that founded and hosted the first Gay Games. SFAA also organised Gay Games II and were key players in the creation of the FGG. A number of original SFAA Board members have fulfilled the role of Director on the FGG and have been important in guiding and shaping the Gay Games movement over the past two decades.
- SGLG Stichting Gay and Lesbian Games, Amsterdam 1998. This is the organising body that staged Gay Games V in Amsterdam in 1998.
- Stonewall 25 The organisation responsible for organising the celebrations marking the 25 years since the 'Stonewall riots'. These riots were initiated by drag queens, butch dykes, gay men and lesbians who were tired of being constantly harassed by the police during their socialising in the New York pub, the Stonewall Inn. The riots lasted for three days and have become a defining historical event marking the beginnings of gay liberation within the US and internationally. The celebrations involved mass street marches (estimated participation of one million), political demonstrations, rallies and festivals in Central Park, New York, as well as human rights lobbying of the United Nations and conference program.
- Sydney 2002 Sydney 2002 Gay Games. This is the organising body that staged Gay Games VI in Sydney in 2002.

- Team Sydney** The peak organisation representing and developing sport for the gay and lesbian communities of Sydney. Individual gay and lesbian sports organisations are represented within the structure of Team Sydney. This body also hosts an annual gay and lesbian sports festival, which occurs during the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Each main city of Australia has a similar peak gay and lesbian sports organisation (i.e. Team Melbourne, Team Perth, Team Brisbane).
- TOGS** Africa Borwa. A peak gay and lesbian sport and recreation organisation within South Africa.
- USGOC** United States Gay Olympic Committee. Founded in 1980-81 by Tom Waddell, Mark Brown and Paul Mart to develop the concept and strategies for staging the first Gay Olympic Games. Based in San Francisco. This organisation became SFAA.
- USOC** United States Olympic Committee. The peak Olympic games organisation within the US that manages all US Olympic issues and represents the US on the IOC.
- VEOC** Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission. The statutory body within the state of Victoria, Australia, which oversees the application of Equal Opportunity and anti-discrimination laws within this state. This organisation also conducts education programs, advocates and gives advice and guidance in these areas, to the wider community of Victoria.
- VFL** Victorian Football League. Peak body governing and representing Australian Rules Football within the state league of Victoria, Australia.
- WMG** World Masters Games. Mass participatory multi-sports event held every four years since 1985. Participants generally have to be over 35 years to be eligible to compete and most sports are divided in to age intervals of five years as well as male/female. Swimmers can enter masters from the age of 25. 'Sport for all' is emphasised although elite competition has also become a feature of many sports at the World Masters level.
- WUG** World University Games. An Olympic style elite multi-sport event held every two years. National teams are made up of some of the best athletes of the world who are also attending University and tertiary education institutions. This event is usually hosted by a major city and host selection is made by the governing body of the WUG or Universiade – Federation Internationale Sport Universiade (FISU)

Sex, Gender and Sexuality Terminology

- Bisexual** A person sexually attracted to men and women.¹ Bisexuality is fluid in its attraction, meaning and identity. According to one of the main US magazines produced by and for bisexuals: “Bisexuality is a whole fluid identity”. It goes on to state: “do not assume that bisexuality is binary or duogamous in nature: that we must have ‘two’ sides or that we must be involved simultaneously with both genders to be fulfilled human beings... There are as many definitions of bisexuality as there are bisexuals. Many of us choose not to label ourselves anything at all, and find the word “bisexual” to be inadequate and too limiting”.²
- Fluid Human** Recognises no borders or rules of gender or sexual orientation – shifting and fluid.
- Gay** Usually refers to men who have a primarily sexual and romantic attraction to men. Can also encompass women who primarily have a sexual and romantic attraction to women. Some homosexual women do not like using lesbian as a definer and prefer to use the term gay. The term gay was originally used as a code word in which gay men could identify themselves to those in the know without revealing their homosexual or queer identity to those not in the know. It meant more than homosexuality as it captured flamboyance, colour, the showy dressing of the fairies of the pre 1920s period that George Chauncey documents so well in *Gay New York*.³ By the 1930s and 40s the use of gay by homosexual men within the US becomes more common practice. Young men began to reject the main term used before this time – queer – as pejorative and deviant. According to Chauncey, by the 1960s men within the gay world “began to regard anyone who participated in a homosexual encounter as ‘gay’, and conversely, to insist that men could be defined as ‘straight’ only on the basis of a total absence of homosexual interest and behaviour”. Gay also became an all-consuming identity, and one to be proud of. Late twentieth century Western culture strongly defines the oppositional categories of homosexual and heterosexual “on the basis of object choice”.⁴

¹ A. Delbridge (Editor in Chief) *The Concise Macquarie Dictionary* (Lane Cove, NSW: Doubleday, 1982), p.121.

² Editorial, *Anything That Moves*, no. 7, Spring 1994 (editorial inside front cover). Also quoted in Marjorie Garber, *Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p.56.

³ Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994) especially pp. 16-22 on definitions.

⁴ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, p. 22.

Gender identity

Self-perception of core being as male, female, in between or fluid human.

Gender style Main ways a person performs and engages with gender (i.e. butch, butch-femme, androgynous, 'straight gay', snag, metrosexual emphasised heterosexual feminine...)

Heterosexual Having primarily sexual and romantic attraction to the 'opposite' sex.⁵ First popularised at the start of the twentieth century in opposition to the term homosexual. Became a defining, naturalising and normalising identity that was considered at the core of a persons being during the twentieth century.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Uses the terminology and sociological theory of Professor Bob Connell in his understanding of masculinities, gender and power relations. Hegemony was first theorised as a term used by Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci to account for the way that dominant cultural and social power was strongly embedded over time and within key institutions and traditions. Hegemonic power is rule by consent and 'common sense' rather than by imposition and force. Connell emphasised that there are multiple forms of masculinity in a society and that the relationships between these masculinities are basically unequal. The type of masculinity which is dominant is referred to as hegemonic masculinity. Connell defined this masculinity as follows:

Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.⁶

Homosexual men are subordinate and stigmatised within this system of hegemonic masculine domination. There are also dominant and subordinate femininities – the dominant being emphasised femininity. This femininity is highly heterosexualised. White, middle-class, able bodied heterosexual men and women enjoy the privileges of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity respectively.

Homosexual Person having their primary sexual and romantic attraction with persons of the same sex. Homosexual can apply to both men and women, however, it is principally associated with men. Homosexuality was named and pathologised by medical experts during the later part of the nineteenth century and predates the use of heterosexuality.

⁵ A Delbridge, *The Concise Macquarie Dictionary*, p. 580.

⁶ Bob Connell, *Masculinities* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995), p. 77.

Hermaphrodites / Intersexuals

According to professor in biology and gender studies at Harvard University, Anne Fausto-Sterling, around 1.7% of the human population do not fit neatly into the two clearly distinguishable sexes – male and female.⁷ Individuals whose genetic, genital, hormonal and/or gonadal sex fail to fit these categories are labelled ‘intersexuals’ or ‘hermaphrodites’ by modern medicine. Such ‘deviation’ is seen as problematic within society generally and by medical experts and since the 1960s corrective surgery, hormonal treatment and ‘appropriate’ gender re-socialisation are the main ‘corrective’ interventions.

According to Intersexual Activist, Cheryl Chase: “The fact that this system for preserving the boundaries of the categories male and female has existed for so long without drawing criticism or scrutiny from any quarter indicates the extreme discomfort that sexual ambiguity excites in our culture”.⁸ An intersex political movement has developed within many Western nations since the 1980s.

Lesbian

Women whose sexual and romantic attraction is principally with women. Women who identify as lesbian. Historian of lesbian life in twentieth century America, Lillian Faderman states that: “It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the category of the lesbian – or the female sexual invert – was formulated”.⁹

Queer

The term queer predated the term gay. It was a term used by men who identified themselves as different from other men mainly by their homosexuality rather than their ‘woman like’ gender style (fairies). Queer was used as a very derogatory and shaming term for homosexuals during the 1940s – 1960s. It was taken up by gay and lesbian radicals in the 1990s as an empowering term that decentred the more solidified and universalising identities of gay and lesbian.

Sexed Embodiment

The shaping of a person by their genetic make up, genital sex, gonadal and hormonal sex – all of which are continuums rather than binary oppositions.

Sexual Orientation

A person’s sexual and romantic attraction towards another person on the basis of their gender style and sexed embodiment

⁷ Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 51-54.

⁸ Cheryl Chase, ‘Hermaphrodites With Attitude. Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism’ *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies. The Transgender Issue*, vol.4. no. 2 (1998), p. 189.

⁹ Lillian, Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1991) p. 2.

Sex/Gender system

The four attributes of gender identity, sexual orientation, sexed embodiment and gender style combined together and shaped by the overriding discourse of heterosexual gender normativity.

Transgender People who live a gender identity which is ‘other’ or opposite to their birth (genetic, genital) sexed embodiment and correspondingly socially assigned gender identity. Transgender people may seek surgery and hormonal treatment to bring their sexed embodiment into line with their core gender identity.

Transexual medical term for people who have undergone sex-realignment surgery (bringing their sexed embodiment – genitals, hormones, gonads, secondary sexual characteristics) in line with their core gender identity.

SRS Sex-realignment surgery, also known as sex reassignment surgery.

Transvestite Men who enjoy wearing the clothes and taking on the traditional gendered performances (social, work etc) of women. This is done from time to time and can be erotically stimulating.

Terminology used for Indigenous Transgender – Third Gender and Same-Sex Attracted Peoples

Bayot Indigenous transgender people based in the Philippines characterised by transvestite and homosexual behaviour.

Hassas Indigenous transgender people based in Morocco, characterised by transvestite and homosexual behaviour.

Kathoey Indigenous transgender people based in Thailand, characterised by transvestite and homosexual behaviour.

Waria Indigenous transgender people based in Indonesia, characterised by transvestite and homosexual behaviour.

Intermediate gender categories of people Indigenous to the Polynesian Islands

Fakafefine Men in Tonga adopting the social affectations, dress and work roles of women.

Fa'fafafine	Men in Samoa adopting the social affectations, dress and work roles of women.
Mahu	Men in Tahiti and Hawaii adopting the social affectations, dress and work roles of women.
Fakatangata	Tongan woman taking on the dress, social and work roles of men
Fatama	Samoaan women taking on the dress, social and work roles of men

Other cultural variations of gender/sexuality

Two Spirited

Berdache Terms encompassing people within Native American tribal societies within the US and Canada who take on more than one gender. Includes 'women-men' – males who have partially or completely adopted the social roles of women, and 'men-women' - females who take on the warrior and healing roles and marry tribal women. Anthropologists came to see third and fourth gender constructions here “embedded in a native American view emphasising transformation and change”.¹⁰

Mati work Mati are women who have sexual relations with men and women simultaneously or consecutively. Mati-work refers to behaviour rather than a fixed identity. This behaviour is more prevalent within working class Surinamese women.

¹⁰ Sabine Lang, 'Lesbians, men-women and two-spirits: Homosexuality and Gender in Native American Cultures', in Blackwood and Wieringa (eds), *Same-sex Relations and Female Desires* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 93.

Appendix 3 Interview Details¹

Organisers

Name	Month /year and city in which interview occurred	Gay Games involvement of interviewee
Terry Allison	November 1996, San Diego US.	Participant – GGI, GGIII-V, FGG Director (1990-96) and FGG Corresponding Secretary (1995-96).
Charles Boyer	October 1996, Sydney Australia.	Participant GGIV Ice Hockey; On Montreal 2002 Bid Committee; delegate on FGG.
Charles Carson	December 1996, New York US.	Participant – GGI – GGV; IGLA representative on FGG; Meet Director - swimming GGIV.
Michael Clarke	November 1996, San Francisco US.	Choir participant (Closing ceremony) – GGI. Cultural participant GIII; Chair of Cultural committee GGII; FGG Corresponding Secretary and Director.
Francis Cox	December 1996, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Director of Fundraising, GGV.
Tom Cracovia	December 1996, New York US.	Participant – GGII-V (various sports); FGG foundation member and Director; Manager organising Team New York for GGII; co-President Team New York in lead up to GGIV; Board member GGIV; organiser Physique GGIV.
Gene Dermody	October 1996, Sydney Australia and November 1996, San Francisco US.	Participant –GG I – V (wrestling); Team San Francisco Board member GGIII and IV; Director FGG, co-President of FGG

¹ All organisers hold positions within the Gay Games movement and their names and titles are accessible to the public. They wished their full names to be used in this history. The description of the organisers Gay Games involvement is not exhaustive. Main roles are listed only. Participants real names have not been used.

Name	Month /year and city in which interview occurred	Gay Games involvement of interviewee
		(1999). Major influence on GG wrestling.
Antonio d'Almeida	September 1996, Sydney Australia	TOGs (South African) observer on FGG; participant GGIV (cycling).
Stephan Faulstroh	October 1996, Sydney Australia.	Participant swimming at GGIV; Vorspiel Scwaler Sportverein (Berlin) representative on FGG. Manager of Accreditation, GGV.
*Mark Janssens	December 1996, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Managing Director GGV.
Shawn Kelly	November 1996, San Francisco US.	Participant GGI – III (tennis); Tennis Tournament Director – GGI; Executive Director GGII, Interim ED GGIII, past FGG Director and Vice President; Co-Founder Team San Francisco (1987).
Susan Kennedy	November 1996, San Francisco US.	Coached (basketball) GG III, FGG co-President (91-98); co-Chair Team San Francisco – (1989-91) & (1993-98).
Lisa Labreque	November 1996, San Francisco US.	Participant GGIV, involved in organisation of Figure Skating GGIV; Team San Francisco rep on FGG, Published <i>Unity '94</i> (book on GGIV).
Derek Lieckty	October 1996, Sydney Australia.	Director of Facilities GGII, FGG Director (1989+), Outreach for FGG, Participant (cycling) GGII-V.
Harold Levine	December 1996, New York US.	Director of Marketing GGIV.
Sara Lewinstein	November 1996, San Francisco US.	Participant GGI – III, organiser of bowling - GGI, GGI and II Board of Management; co-Chair Sport, GGII, Women's Outreach GGI-III;

Name	Month /year and city in which interview occurred	Gay Games involvement of interviewee
		foundation member and Director FGG.
Winston Mathis	November 1996, San Francisco US.	FGG Director (1992-95) – representing Team San Francisco. Treasurer Team SF (1992-96)
Ellen Markowitz	December 1996, New York US.	Deputy Director Operations GGIV. Participant (tennis) GGIV.
Paul Mart	January 1997, Melbourne Australia.	Original member of USOC; Board member GGI and II; FGG Director, Outreach for GG and FGG.
Lindy McKnight	November 1996, San Francisco US.	Participant GGI and II; organiser of raquetball GGII. GGIII softball coach.
Rosemary Mitchell	November 1996, San Francisco US.	Choir participant (ceremonies) GGI; Board of Management GGII; Chair of Fundraising and of Programs, GGII; Foundation member and FGG Secretary and Director; Influential advocate of Cultural Festival.
Steve Mumby	December 1996, New York US.	Director of Accreditation and Chair of Financial committee, GIV: FGG Director, Corresponding Secretary and co-President (1998-99).
Brent Nicholson-Earle	December 1996, New York US.	Participant GGII-IV in marathon, track and field and skater (human torch) for GGIII and IV; foundation member and FGG Director.
Rudolf Oosterhof	December 1996, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.	At time of interview, organiser of softball, baseball, ice /hockey and figure skating at GGIV.
Jeffry Pike	October 1996, Sydney Australia	Participant – sport and culture (volleyball, dance, swimming soccer) GGII – V; President Team New

Appendix 4 Interview Schedule

Not all questions given below were asked during an interview. Many of the interviews were organised according to the order cited, however, they were also adapted to the particular background, Gay Games involvement and interests of the interviewee.

Section One – General Background Information.

Can you give me a brief description of yourself – where were you brought up? family details, education, occupation, hobbies/interests, sports involvement.

When did you first identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual? Do you want to say anything about this and your coming out experiences?

Section Two – Sports and Gay Games background.

Can you describe your sporting background to me? What sports are you/have you been involved in? What were your achievements in these sports? Any memorable moments in your sports involvement that you would like to share?

What is your current involvement in sport?

Can you recall if homophobia was ever an issue for you during your sports involvement – elaborate....

Do you think/have you experienced any particular issues that face lesbian and gay sports organisations – that differ from mainstream sports organisations (i.e.non gay identified)? Why is there are need for gay and lesbian sports organisations and events?

Tell me how you came to be involved with the Gay Games.

Tell me about your sports experiences at the Gay Games – enjoyment, achievements, highlights, what was the atmosphere like? Were the Games true to their ideals of participation, inclusion and personal best? How do they compare with your mainstream sports experiences?

Any further comments?

Section Three – General Comments About the Gay Games

What do the Gay Games mean to you?

What significance has the Gay Games for the gay and lesbian community?

How and why are you involved with the FGG or the organisation of the Gay Games?

Describe the nature of your involvement?

I am looking at issues of diversity and inclusion within the FGG and the Gay Games themselves – do you want to make any comments on this?

Some issues that could be explored here – gender politics, diversity of GLBTQI community – how catered for within the Gay Games movement?

What efforts have been made to facilitate the involvement within the Gay Games and FGG of peoples from non-Western countries who are gay and lesbian etc?

What is the place for straight people at the Gay Games?

What is working well with the Gay Games?

What is working well with the FGG?

What do you think needs to be improved if anything? Please comment?

Do you have anything to say re the relationship between the sports program and the cultural festival of the Gay Games?

What effects have HIV and AIDS had on the Games?

How have HIV/AIDS been effected by the Gay Games?

The founder of the Gay Games, Dr. Tom Waddell, conceived the Gay Games as “ a chance to shatter homosexual stereotypes, a chance to demystify and motive homosexual athletes, a chance to bridge the gap that has long existed between gay men and women”. How well have the Gay Games achieved these original goals? Any comments?

Waddell also envisaged the Gay Games to be ideally free of ageism, sexism, racism, homophobia and nationalism – what do you think of this vision for the Games? How much do the Gay Games live up to this vision? How? Any comments?

Section Four - Specifics on Particular Gay Games

(Each Games section was tailored to the particular person being interviewed and their experience of the Gay Games – here is a sample of what could be asked. – or used as a prompt. If the interviewee went off on their own tangents etc – their story became the guide)

Gay Games I

Can you tell me what you recall of how the first Gay Games came about?

What was your involvement with these early Games?

What sort of gay and lesbian sport infrastructure existed at this time?

Can you tell me anything about SFAA at this time?

Can you tell me anything about the formation of the guiding principles of the Gay Games (inclusion, participation, personal best – were these the ones?)?

Can you tell me how the first Gay Games was organised – what was your involvement in this?

Difficulties, challenges, highlights....

Legal case with USOC

Opening and closing ceremonies

Sports organisation

How do you most remember Gay Games I?

Gay Games II

What was your involvement with these Gay Games?

Can you recall how Gay Games II got started?

How organised?

Were there any major issues to stand out for these Games?

HIV/AIDS impact, South Africa, USOC legal case....

What were the most memorable moments of these Games for you?

Did GGII differ from GGI – how?

Any interesting stories to tell

Any homophobic incidents?

Opening and /closing ceremonies

Selection and organisation of sports

Gay Games III

What was your involvement with these Gay Games?

What do you remember most – how , why

How would you describe these Games in comparison with previous ones (if you can make a comparison)?

How were these Games organised?

What was Vancouver like?

Any stories to tell?

Organisational issues, highlights, homophobic incidents?

Sports program comments

Cultural festival comments

Any other comments, memories

Gay Games IV

What was your involvement with these Gay Games?

What do you remember most – how , why

How would you describe these Games in comparison with previous ones (if you can make a comparison)?

How were these Games organised?

What was New York like? Was the city friendly, fun, mainstream reception...?

Any stories to tell?

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